

Contesting Caprivi

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NATIONALISM IN NAMIBIA (2010)

Bennett Kangumu

Introduction by Lazarus Hangula

Contesting Caprivi

A History of Colonial Isolation and
Regional Nationalism in Namibia

Basel Namibia Studies Series 10

Basler Afrika Bibliographien 2011

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Cover photograph:

An uneasy alliance of war and politics: Chiefs Josiah Mutwa Moraliswani (front row, left) and Richard Temuso Muhinda Mamili (front row, right), with members of the so called South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF), the South African backed army in Namibia, on their way to the celebrations of the 10th anniversary of Battalion 701 in August 1987. Battalion 701, one of two ethnically designed battalions in the Caprivi war zone, was stationed in Mpacha close to Katima Mulilo, eastern Caprivi. National Archives of Namibia, Photo Collection 09358.

Basic Cover Design: VischerVettiger Basel

Adapted Cover Design: Petra Kerckhoff

Printed by John Meinert Printing (PTY) Ltd., Windhoek, Namibia

Printed on 'triple green' paper: sixty percent sugar cane fibre, chlorine-free, sustainable afforestation.



ISBN Switzerland: 978-3-905758-46-7

ISSN 2297-458X

Contents

Basel Namibia Studies Series	IX
Isolation, Invasions and a 'Caprivian' Identity	XI
An Introduction by <i>Lazarus Hangula</i>	XI
Acknowledgements	1
1 Introduction	3
Population	4
Ethnic Terminology	14
Sources and Methodology	16
Limitations of the Study	19
Literature Review	20
2 Pre-Colonial Caprivi: Conquest, Betrayel and Rivalry	25
Subiya-Lozi Relations	27
Subiya-Makololo Interaction	35
Subiya Defiance after the Lozi Restoration	38
Other Groups in Pre-colonial Caprivi	41
Summary	45
3 Colonial Administrative Identity I: From 1890 to World War II	47
Informal Colonialism: Missionaries, Traders, and their Interaction in Caprivi	48
The Creation of the Caprivi Identities:	
Germany's Riparian State on the Zambezi	55
Creating the Caprivi Identities	55
Administering the Caprivi during the German Colonial Rule	61
A Sphere of Influence, 1890-1909	61
Ma-Dostela in <i>Der Caprivi Zipfel</i> , 1909-1914	64
A Transferable Identity: The Caprivi 1914-1939	72
Military Rule, 1915-1921	72
Under the Bechuanaland Administration, 1921-1929	76
Appended to SWAA: The Caprivi Strip 1929-1939	78

4 Colonial Administrative Identity II:	
From Bantu Reserve to Bantustan, 1939-1982	92
A Bantu Reserve, 1939-1960	92
Perceptions of Land and People	93
A Place of Natural Beauty: The ECZ Bantu Reserve	95
The Imperial War Graves Commission and the Caprivi	99
Chief Simataa Mamili and the Administration	100
Education and Health	102
Barotse Privileges, Muntunjobuswa and the Caprivian Identities	108
A South African Bantustan in Central Africa, the Caprivi Strip 1960–1980	111
The Odendaal Recommendation for a Bantustan	112
The UN, Odendaal and the Caprivian Identities	113
The Planning Committee	115
Growth of Katima Mulilo and Social Control	117
Ngweze Village Development	118
The Caprivi Legislative Assembly and Caprivi Government	122
Summary	126
5 The Frontier Identity of the Eastern Caprivi <i>Zipfel</i>	128
The Mfecane and Refuge as an Aspect of Frontier Identity	129
Outlaw Frontier, 1890 – 1909	131
Migrant Labour as an Aspect of Frontier Identity	133
Military Frontier as an Aspect of Caprivianness	144
Summary	161
6 Rival Histories and Contested Caprivi Identities	165
The Dispute over ‘Indigenesness’ between Mafwe and Masubiya	167
The Internal Boundary Issue	172
History of the Internal Boundary Dispute	173
Katima Mulilo: A Communal Capital	176
Bukalo, Seat of Munitenge Royal Establishment	177
The Lake Lyambezi Area	177
Caprivi Politics and the Issue of Indigenesness	179
The Mafwe <i>Kuta</i>	179
Self-Government and Indigenesness	182
The Katima Declaration on National Reconciliation	185
Summary	187

7 African Responses to the Caprivi Identities	190
Sources of Discontent Prior to 1946	190
The Proposed Incorporation of SWA into the Union	192
The Odendaal Commission Public Hearings	196
The Public Hearings at Katima Mulilo	196
The Caprivi African National Union (CANU)	198
The Changing World Beyond our Borders	198
The Formation of CANU	201
CANU's Subversive Activities against the Authorities	207
A Cattle Sale as a Contested Terrain	211
8 Regional Nationalism and Repression	214
Political Repression and Brendan Simbwaye's Disappearance	214
The Trial of Brendan Simbwaye and his Co-accused	216
The Simbwaye-Goldblatt-Kapuuu Connection	220
The 1968 Singalamwe (Mayala village) Massacre	227
CANU: 1964 and after	230
The 'New CANU'	233
Summary	234
9 Secession: The Identity of People as 'Caprivians' and not Namibians	237
A Peripheral Identity: Caprivi Under Colonialism	239
South Africa's Construction of Caprivi Secession	244
Mishake Muyongo and Caprivi Secession	246
Summary	260
10 Conclusion	263
List of Figures	272
List of Maps	273
List of Tables	274
Abbreviations	275
Bibliography	277
Index	298

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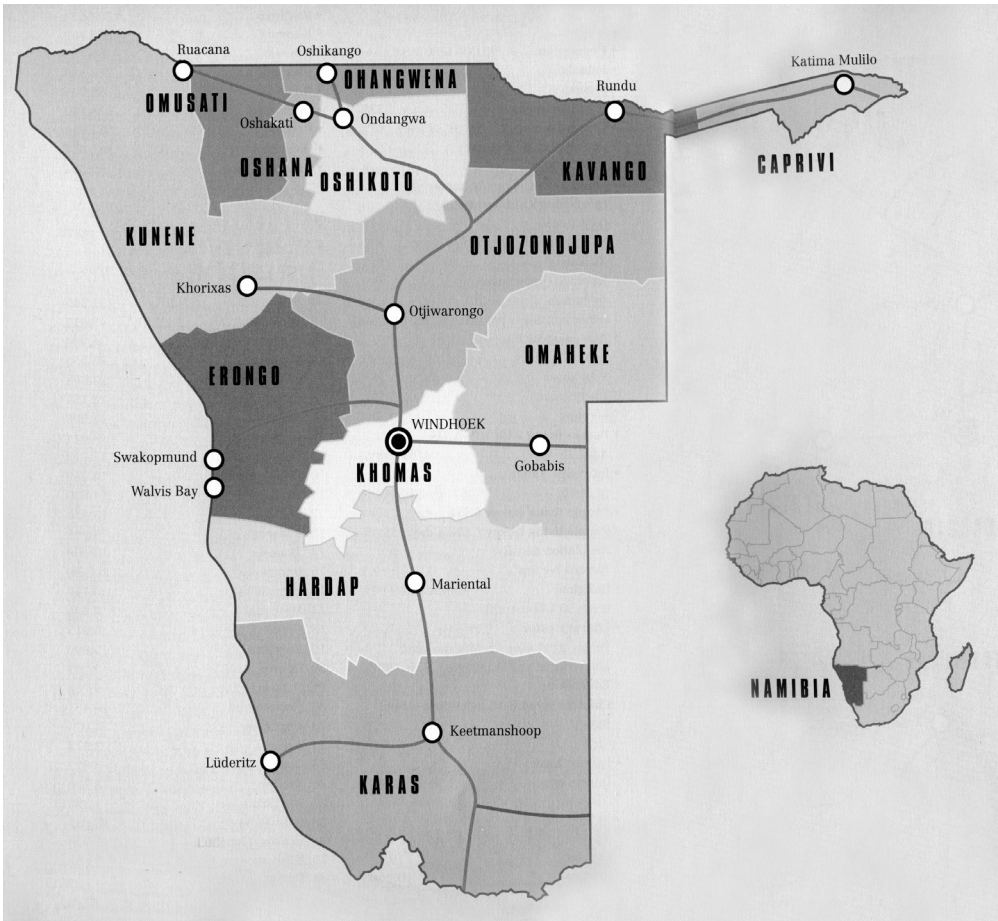
In 1997, *P. Schlettwein Publishing* (PSP) launched the *Basel Namibia Studies Series*. Its primary aim was to lend support to a new generation of research, scholars and readers emerging with the independence of Namibia in 1990.

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Academic publishing, whether from or about Namibia, remains limited. The *Basel Namibia Studies Series* continues to provide a forum for exciting scholarly work in the human and social sciences.

The editors welcome contributions. For further information, or submission of manuscripts, please contact the Basler Afrika Bibliographien at www.baslerafrika.ch.



Map 1: Namibia and its regions

Isolation, Invasions and a 'Caprivian' Identity

An Introduction

My academic interests first as a doctoral student in geography and later as a boundary delimitation commission member in the area of former Barotseland, have brought me into contact with a plethora of documents and books in Portuguese, English, German, Afrikaans, French and Italian related to the geographic area of the present day Caprivi. These multi-faceted documents and books, written by geographers or explorers, missionaries, hunters, ethnographers, diplomats, students, as well as chartered companies, the military, WNLA (Witwatersrand Native Labour Association), administration, agriculture and hydrology officers inspired my attempt to write a *Guide to a Caprivi Historiography*. Alas, the guide remains a draft. A striking omission in all these accounts are the voices and viewpoints of the local people. Bennett Kangumu's groundbreaking study of the Caprivi breaks with this legacy.

Dr. Kangumu's book was originally submitted as a PhD thesis, *Contestations over Caprivi Identities: From Precolonial Times to the Present*. It is as much a study about forms of micro-, sub- and intra-nationalisms,¹ as it is an analysis about the making of identities, most particularly the construction of a 'Caprivian identity'.² These topics are of major importance to Namibia in view of the current Treason Trial of some 100 'Caprivian' separatists. This book is a timely contribution to current debates surrounding these issues.

The creation of the Caprivi Strip is widely perceived not only as a colonial absurdity, i.e. an appendix to Namibia that owes its existence to the incompetence and ignorance of German negotiators in the arena of the 'Scramble for Africa', but also as a territory unto which Germany but also the pre-colonial Lozi empire projected unfulfilled hegemonic ambitions. These accounts bequeathed a troublesome legacy to the modern Namibian state. The book unravels a more complex and substantial history than the anecdotal stories of an African territory named after a German Chancellor with an Italian name, Graf von Caprivi, would suggest. The solid, empirical approach of the author is grounded in a multitude of written (primary and secondary) and oral sources. The author weaves the information arising out of these often scant, disparate, subjective and biased sources into a general and coherent narrative on the transformations that affected the Caprivi and its inhabitants. The thread that holds the seemingly confusing array of incidents and ever-changing alliances in the region together is Kangumu's understanding of the crucial importance of identity constructions in

¹ See Kangumu's explanations in his Conclusion.

² *Ibid*, esp. Chapter 6.

the Caprivi. Kangumu uses the 'I' and 'we-ness' ontology as an interpretative tool to explore the commonalities of people in the region and, as such, the determination of communities, at particular points in their troubled history, to survive and maintain as much autonomy as was possible in the face of these invaders with their different agendas.³

I would argue that this book enhances our understanding of the Caprivi to an extent that no previous work has done. It succeeds in demolishing persistent myths about the supposed lack of tradition and identity of the various ethnic groups in the area and the hegemonic aspirations of external groups, such as the Lozi, of what is today southwestern Zambia. It demolishes the myth of the German claim to Caprivi as having been a miscalculation, and highlights the geostrategic rationale behind the creation of the Strip or 'Zipfel' in the first place.

Another important theme is the history of neglect which, according to its author, characterised the Caprivi for much of the 20th century. This was attributed to the frequently changing colonial administrations, whether British Bechuanaland, South Africa or South West Africa. Such neglect was generally characterised by having wildlife preservation more to heart than the welfare of the population – a perception shared by the people in the Caprivi. This neglect, as Bennett Kangumu, argues, came to a sudden end when South African strategic interests in the region became dominant during the period of Africa's decolonisation. A flurry of development projects are linked to this, as is the pronounced invention of a 'Caprivian' ethnicity under South African auspices. Kangumu successfully demonstrates how such a 'Caprivian' identity, which had developed throughout the long, relatively isolated and separate treatment of the area as a particular colonial administrative unit, influenced by the differential treatment of Christian missions, the education and migrant labour systems, was substantially reinforced by the South African Bantustan policies of the 1960s as outlined in the Odendaal Plan. As the author convincingly shows, these developments have of late ushered in secessionist activities in the Caprivi.

Bennett Kangumu's chapters on recent history, for example, the role of the Caprivi African National Union (CANU) and its various factions since the 1960s, or the tragic and farcical attempts of armed insurrection and secession from Namibia in the late 1990s, provide important new insights to our understanding and yet, for obvious reasons, need further research. On the one hand, not all relevant archives are accessible to research; on the other, as the author points out, oral history research on events that are still highly contested and where participants as well as observers often choose to be silent, is very difficult to conduct. As such the so-called UNITA connection or the role of various players in the by no means

³ *Ibid.*

monolithic South African state apparatus would probably also require more attention. Having said this, another great strength of this book is the life histories and political roles of key players in and for Caprivi, in particular those of Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye and Albert Mishake Muyongo.

This is a book no one will be able to ignore in any future historiography, not only of the Caprivi and Namibia, but also in the wider context of south-central African history. Much Namibian historical writing is narrowly centered on its own national territorial boundaries and often rests on easily accessible, and almost exclusively, colonial sources. The work of Dr Kangumu does not fall into that category, nor is this the least of the book's merits. I congratulate the author for his monumental and multi-disciplinary work, as well as the Basler Afrika Bibliographien for, once again, making Namibian historical scholarship available to a wider public. Thanks is also due to Ellen Namhila, the prolific Namibian academic woman writer, for the assistance rendered to me in reviewing Dr Kangumu's work.

Lastly, my advice to all those eager to look at the Caprivi Region with a new perspective is to repeat that famous Latin scholastic appeal: *Tolle, lege* – Grab and read!

Prof Dr Lazarus Hangula
Vice Chancellor
University of Namibia
Windhoek, November 2010

Acknowledgements

This book is a revised version of my PhD thesis that was completed at the History Department of the University of Cape Town.¹ I thank the University of Cape Town for giving me permission to publish my research thus making it available to a wider Namibian audience.

A generous financial grant from the Carl Schlettwein Foundation of Basel, Switzerland, made the writing of this work possible. I am highly indebted to the Foundation for this and for previous awards over the years at a time when scholarships to study history seemed to dry up.

My supervisor, Prof. Chris Saunders, was unrelenting in both his encouragement for the completion of the thesis and his belief in the important contribution this would make to Namibian historiography. Many thanks are due to him for his undivided attention and support during the process of writing this thesis.

Many thanks to my friend Mike Nefale and his family for putting me up on two occasions when I visited Johannesburg to utilize the University of Witwatersrand libraries and archives.

Thanks are owed to the staff of the archives I worked in who assisted me in locating material relevant to my topic. These are the National Archives of Namibia, National Archives of Zambia, the Holy Family Mission at Katima Mulilo, and the Archives of the Archdiocese of Windhoek.

I thank Dag Henrichsen of the Basler Afrika Bibliographien who kindly put at my disposal a transcript of notes by Israel Goldblatt in which he recorded his encounters with Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye, my colleagues Jeremy Silvester and Werner Hillebrecht, for bringing photocopies of material on the Caprivi from the National Archives of Botswana, and pointing out other useful sources on my topic held in that archive. Jeremy Silvester helped to edit the thesis once it was transformed into a book. Many thanks go to him as well as to Judith Kalk for improving the quality of my work.

Special thanks go also to Ferozah Jacobs, Staff Housing Officer at UCT Forest Hill Residence, for ensuring, even when approached on short notice, that I had a flat to stay in on many visits I made to Cape Town.

¹ Bennett Kangumu: *Contestations over Caprivi Identities: From Precolonial Times to the Present*. University of Cape Town, 2008.

Writing this thesis would have been a lonely affair without the wonderful support I received from family and friends whose emails and telephone calls made a huge difference. My two uncles, Vincent Mafwila and Clement Mafwila acted as a core study group in discussing many issues, especially those related to the liberation war: many thanks to you both for allowing me to test some of my theories on you. My younger sister Nzila Muhau deserves special thanks for the many coffees she made for me when I seemed stressed. Last but not least my heartfelt thanks go to my daughter Mpambo and my son Nfwambi for their support and understanding and for not complaining that I neglected them during frequent absences from home several times during the process of gathering data and writing the thesis.

1 Introduction

Caprivi is the name of the narrow strip of land protruding from the northeast corner of Namibia toward Botswana and Zambia. It is one of the 13 political regions of Namibia and takes its name from the Caprivi Strip. The Strip is named after the German chancellor Leo Graf von Caprivi, who obtained the land from Great Britain as part of a general settlement (1890) between the two countries. This gave the former Germany colony of South West Africa (now Namibia) access to the Zambezi River.

The Caprivi Region is c. 300 miles (480 km) long and 50 miles (80 km) wide. It is bordered on the north by Angola and Zambia and on the south by Botswana. The Caprivi is a tropical area, with high temperatures and heavy rainfall during the December to March rainy season, making it the wettest region of Namibia. The terrain is mostly made up of swamps, floodplains, wetland, and woodland.

Caprivi is home to 450 animal species, including elephants, making it a popular game-watching spot. The wildlife is protected by several nature reserves, Bwabwata, Mudumu, West Caprivi Game Park, Mahango Game Reserve, and Mamili National Park. Animals travel freely across the border with Botswana, into the Chobe National Park. The strip is a prime bird-watching area, with close to 70 per cent of bird species found in Namibia being recorded here. In addition to the Zambezi River, the Kwando River crosses the strip and marks the border with Botswana. Tributaries of the river in this area are known by different names, including the Linyanti and Chobe.

The political geography of Caprivi owes more to complex strategic reasons than to natural geography, and indeed the Zambezi and Chobe rivers are not natural boundaries. During the pre-colonial times, the Caprivi was of great strategic importance, notably as a meeting place of the Kololo, Tawana and Ndebele spheres of influence. Impalila Island in the far east of Caprivi was of strategic importance in the 1870s as the terminus of the 'Old Hunter's Road' and the entry point to the Lozi Kingdom for white traders, hunters, travellers and missionaries from Panda Matenga in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

Population

The population size of the Caprivi Region was 79,826 in 2001, comprised of 40,749 females and 39,077 males.² In 1991 the population size was 90,422. 44,065 of that number were male and 46,357 females. Migration to other regions accounts for the disparity between the 1991 and 2001 population figures. The region was added to the German colonial empire in 1890 and the first (estimated) population records for the Caprivi date from 1905. In that year F. Seiner, an Austrian, was sent on an expedition to investigate conditions in the Caprivi and to determine the value of the territory to Germany. Under the heading 'General Survey', Seiner estimated the population of the Caprivi to be 4,200 persons spread over 83 villages,³ with the Masubiya area under Letia comprising 34 villages (population 1579); under Siluka in the west there were 17 Mayeyi and 10 Mafwe villages containing 978 and 432 persons respectively.



Figure 1: An early photograph of people in western Caprivi, 1909. According to the original legend, it depicts 'Mafwe at a dance'

² Republic of Namibia, *2001 Population and Housing Census, Caprivi Region: Basic analysis with highlights*, Windhoek: National Planning Commission, March 2003, p.4.

³ 'Report of Expedition made by F. Seiner from Katima Mulilo to Libebe, August 1-25 1905', in Kruger, C.E., 'History of the Caprivi Strip, 1890-1984', (NAN: A.472), Chapter 3, p. 9.

In 1909 a German officer, Lt. Kurt Streitwolf, reported that the region was 'deserted' yet estimated that 5,000 Masubiya and 4,000 Mafwe and Mayeyi lived there.⁴ These figures are relatively high and directly contradict his claim that the territory was deserted due to a mass migration to avoid German rule. Kruger shows that only some of the Masubiya, mostly Malozi, crossed the Zambezi River into Barotseland (Zambia) and the Chobe River into the Bechuanaland Protectorate (Botswana) at the news of the arrival of the Germans and not those in the west of Caprivi, that is, the Mafwe.⁵ Streitwolf noted that the Malozi were 'disliked by the Masubia, otherwise they would all have gone across the river with the Malozi leaving the Caprivi depopulated in those parts.'⁶ Streitwolf provides slightly higher figures in his book, 'Der Caprivi Zipfel' in 1911, 'The total native population I estimate as follows: 5,000 Masubia [Masubiya], 3,000 Mafue [Mafwe] and Majee [Mayeyi], 1,500 Mambukuschu [Mbukushu], 200 Hukwe [San]'.⁷ The increase of 700 could be a result of natural population increase and the addition of the categories 'Mambukushu' and the Barakwena (San).

No census was taken during the war years (both First and Second World Wars). The first census in the region after the end of German colonial rule was conducted when the region was administered from the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The census enumerated the population of the Caprivi Strip in 1921 as follows: 'Males 2,003; females 2,246; total 4,249'.⁸ Significantly, the Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration did not break down the census according to ethnic criteria – unlike the German and later, South African administrations. This figure does not include the few European missionaries and traders resident in the territory at the time.

Census details are available for each of the years 1930 to 1939, the period during which the Caprivi was under the South West Africa Administration (SWAA). The figures for the 1930s were probably estimated rather than derived from an actual physical count. For our purposes only the 1930 and 1939 figures are shown below.⁹ As with subsequent figures the category Mayeyi is dropped along with other smaller groups such as Mbukushu. These are now incorporated into the broader category of 'Mafwe'. Significantly, a new category, 'Children', is introduced during this period. Interestingly this category is not subjected to either ethnic categorization or gender breakdown.

⁴ Kruger, C.E., 'History of the Caprivi Strip, 1890-1984', (NAN: A.472), Chapter 3, p. 15.

⁵ Kruger, 1984, p. 17.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 14.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 22

⁸ Kruger, 1984, Chapter 10, p. 5.

⁹ *Ibid.*

Year	Mafwe men	Mafwe women	Mafwe Children	Masubiya men	Masubiya women	Masubiya children	Totals men	Totals women	Totals children	Grand Total
1930	1036	1454	2379	750	936	1469	1786	2390	3848	8024
1939	1182	1908	3026	906	1251	2151	2088	3159	5177	10424

Table 1: Census figures for 1930 and 1939

The respective tribal totals were 4,869 Mafwe (inclusive of other groups) and 3,155 Masubiya in 1930. In 1939 there were 6,116 Mafwe and 4,308 Masubiya.

The Union of South Africa held its population census in May 1946. To coincide with that census and, since the Eastern Caprivi Strip was then administered from Pretoria, a locally devised population census was held for the territory on the 31 May 1946¹⁰ and the results received by the Union Director of Census and the Department of Native Affairs. For the Mafwe (again inclusive of all other groups), a population total of 9,563 was recorded, broken down as follows: 2,173 men; 2,865 women; 2,370 boys and 2,155 girls. For the Masubiya a total of 5,548 was recorded, broken down as follows: 1,432 men; 1,549 women; 1,378 boys and 1,189 girls. A further category, Europeans, was included in this census: five men, one woman, one boy and girls recorded as none. The total population came to 15,111. In this census the gender of the children was taken into account. In May 1982 the total population of Caprivi was given as 39,500.¹¹

To conclude this section it is necessary to make a few brief observations regarding the censuses. While it certainly was the best that could be done under the prevailing circumstances, the accuracy of the census results is open to question on a number of levels. The officials designated to carry out the census were cattle guards and 'native' constables who, considering their low level if not total lack of formal education at the time, were not adequately trained to carry out the task of enumerating people in a population census. The methodology that was used could also be brought into question. Each village was required to have four sticks of different lengths, the longest for men, followed by women, boys and the shortest for girls. A ring was cut a short distance from one end of each stick to indicate each person present in the village. Village heads made the count first thing in the morning and when the notching had been completed, they waited for the arrival of the constables and cattle guards and simply handed over the sticks.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

In some instances very significant variations can be observed in the census figures. The increase was due not only to natural increase but was subject to influx from adjacent territories. A closer look at the detailed figures show that in the Masubiya area of the eastern Caprivi, villages were much smaller than in the Mafwe areas in the west of Caprivi. The Masubiya areas are subject to annual flood inundation and villages had to be situated on the available higher ground (mounds) in the floodplain. The largest Masubiya village in 1946 held 166 persons compared to the largest Mafwe village with 406 residents.¹² An average village figure for the Masubiya was 33; for the Mafwe this was 74. At the time there were 156 Masubiya villages as compared with 130 Mafwe villages.¹³

Census figures referred to above have no category for 'Lozi' or Lozi speakers. A common error, even in scholarly presentations, is reference to 'Caprivians' as Lozis. This can be seen in the following report: 'The Caprivi secessionists are fighting for the independence of the Caprivi Strip, where Namibia's 92 000 Lozi-speakers live'.¹⁴ Apart from being a generalization, I doubt whether such a high proportion of 'Caprivians' speak Lozi. Nor does being able to speak Lozi make the majority of 'Caprivians' Lozis. SiLozi became the lingua franca in eastern Caprivi for historical reasons. With the development of Bantustans, the apartheid regime instituted it as the medium of instruction in schools, partly because it was close to Sotho (Northern Pedi) and therefore learning materials and Sotho-speaking instructors could be imported from South Africa. The spread of Lozi in Caprivi is thus largely due to the fact that it is the medium of instruction in schools, particularly during the early phase of primary education.

The language policy of Namibia provides that a child should be instructed in his/her mother tongue during the first four years of primary education. For the people of Caprivi, however, 'mother tongue' is taken to mean Lozi within education circles. The issue is a political one because Lozi is seen as an agent helping to overcome apparent antagonism and tribal tension between the Masubiya and the Mafwe.¹⁵ It was thought that this would promote a 'common Caprivian regional identity'.¹⁶ On the contrary though, I would argue that it is this regionalism, couched in Lozi terms and which stresses affinity with a Zambian population and a Lozi past, that is the source of secession in Caprivi and is actually detrimental to Namibian nation-building in relation to the Caprivi.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Namasiku Ilukena, 'Caprivi secession stirs Barotseland hopes', <http://www.namibian.com.na/netstories/December98/caprivi1a.html>. Accessed on 5 March 2007.

¹⁵ Cluver 1991: 44; Fosse, 1996, 180.

¹⁶ Fosse, 1996: 180.

Still, evidence suggests that Lozi is not the most widely spoken language in Caprivi. Statistics listed below show an ethnic breakdown by language in the Caprivi Region. The statistics are extracted from chapter seven of the 2001 Namibia Population and Housing Census under the heading Household Composition and Characteristics. On page 32 under 7.4 'Main language spoken in the household', the following observation is made:

The Census included a question on language usually spoken or most spoken at home. In the Caprivi Region several languages were identified ... Caprivi languages are the most spoken languages in households in the Region, with 88% of the households communicating in these languages. Of the Caprivi languages, Sisubiya is used by 38% of the households which speak Caprivi languages.

The distribution of households by Caprivi language spoken in Caprivi in the 2001 Census is shown in Table 7.4.2 (p. 32) as follows:

Main Language	Number of households	Percentage
Lozi (Sikololo)	3 254	21.9
Sifwe	3 129	21.0
Sisubiya	5 720	38.4
Siyeyi	1 179	7.9
Totela	1 588	10.6
Total	14 870	100.0

Table 2: Distribution of households by languages spoken in Caprivi, 2001 Population Census

Smaller groups such as Mbalangwe, Mbukushu and Barakwena (San) are omitted because of their low numbers. These are most likely integrated into the category Sifwe or the category Lozi. Either way this does not impact on the dominance of Sisubiya as the most widely spoken language in Caprivi at household level.

My interest in the history of the Caprivi grew after I completed a Masters thesis in 2000.¹⁷ Whilst that thesis dealt specifically with the history and evolution of administrative control of the Caprivi during the South African colonial occupation, what emerged from that study was the pursuance of the policy of neglect¹⁸ by its successive colonial masters.

¹⁷ B. Kangumu, 'A Forgotten Corner of Namibia: Aspects of the History of the Caprivi Strip, c.1939-1980', MA Thesis, UCT, 2000.

¹⁸ Mushinge C. 'The Impact of Colonial Policies on Ecological Control and African Cattle Production in Botswana, 1885-1984.' EASSRR, January 1991: 5. <http://www.ossrea.net/eassrr/jan91/>

This neglect seems to have been justified on the basis that the creation of the territory was a historical mistake. Geographically, historically, socially and culturally the territory and its people are different from those in the rest of South West Africa/Namibia. They had closer affinities to their kin in Zambia and Botswana than to others in the country in which they were included. The Caprivi and its people remained peripheral as far as Namibian colonial state formation went, and while the inhabitants of the area were depicted largely as Lozi in contemporary historiography and ethnographic literature, they were not fully integrated as such. This sense of 'not belonging' has produced what is referred to here as a separate and troubled 'Caprivi identity'.

On an individual level, the colonial legacy is a fragmented identity. One feels, as Franz Fanon, put it, 'compelled to continuously ask oneself: In reality, who am I?'¹⁹: Am I 'Caprivian', Namibian, Zambian, Batswana, Angolan, or all of the above? At the local level, my ethnic background is that my paternal grandfather is Subiya while my paternal grandmother is a Yeyi. Both my maternal grandparents are Subiyas. While I have surviving relatives residing in the Yeyi area, I consider myself a Subiya where I grew up. I should add that I see myself as a Subiya of Caprivi, even though I have aunts and uncles who reside in and are Subiyas living in Botswana. This would make me a 'Caprivian' at a regional level and a Namibian at the national level. My ethnic, regional and national identities do not conflict, rather they live in harmony within me. This identity, the 'I' in me, is informed by historical and cultural attributes. The problem of personal identity is chiefly concerned with the question - what is the 'I', or self, that remains the same from year to year? Endless questions and debates arise from this such as, is there anything in body or mind that has the necessary persistence? Does identity lie in the body? Probably not since the cells of our body constantly change. Then, does it lie in the mind? Probably not since the mass of feelings and ideas forming consciousness constantly change too. Consciousness itself seems to be suspended by sleep every night.

My interest in the topic partly stems from my academic training in history as well as from a desire for self discovery, wanting to know more about myself, my past and my people (meaning the 'we-ness' in me). What are the borders of inclusion and exclusion in my 'I' and 'We'?

This book will not provide a definitive answer to these questions, as both self-ascription and ascription by others are critical in the processes that produce ethnic groups and identities. Group identities are formed in an interaction between assignment – that which others

mushinge.htm, p.16. , Accessed 05 March 2007.

¹⁹ Frantz Fanon, quoted in Birt, E. Robert (ed.). *The Quest for Community and Identity: Critical Essays in Africana Social Philosophy*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002, p. 3.

say we are – and assertion – who or what we claim to be.²⁰ This book will aim to provide a ‘Caprivian’ perspective on Caprivi’s history, as objectively as possible. All histories are written from a particular perspective therefore whether a historical work is objective or subjective depends on the assessor’s views and perceptions, itself a highly subjective exercise that involves value judgments. The shortcomings related to subjectivity are not mine alone. At times they are inherent in the nature of the subject and object of research, for example, ‘researching violently divided societies’²¹ might present its own difficulties, well described by Tamar Hermann:

The problem in the study of socio-political conflicts, as well as finding ways to resolve them, is that social scientists, who are themselves members of society and of a specific socio-political group, often either take a stand on the conflict they are researching, or are, in one way or another, involved in it.²²

Being an ‘insider’ though has its own advantages, Hermann continues:

It appears that researchers who belong to one of the sides of a conflict, that is, insiders, are best qualified for gathering the hard data on their own side: they are proficient in the language, familiar with the socio-cultural and political contexts, have detailed and sometimes first-hand information regarding relevant events, and have incomparable access to primary resources and informants.²³

The central concern in this book is the Caprivi identity or, rather, ‘identities’ and their contestations: What are these? Briefly, Caprivi identity is defined as a totality of feelings, perceptions and actions that came together over time to produce a sense of not belonging: feeling separate, different, isolated, remote, troubled and contested. In this analysis it is shown that Caprivi identities have always been, and continue to be, a highly contested terrain. This contestation predates formal colonialism, it outlived the colonial state, and is present in the independent state. I will show that the contestation over Caprivi identities took a variety of forms and divergent interests including contested identities and rival histories, contested labour and military frontiers, contested regional nationalism and lastly, contested state formation. These factors when combined support another assertion, namely the argument that Caprivi as a space was not situated on the periphery of power, whether that of the Lozi or Kololo empire, colonial state, or independent Namibia. Caprivi might

²⁰ See the work of Ito–Alder 1980.

²¹ Marie Smyth and Gillian Robinson, *Researching Violently Divided Societies: Ethical and Methodological Issues*, New York, United Nations University Press, [n.d.].

²² Tamar Hermann, ‘The Impermeable Identity Wall: The Study of Violent Conflicts by ‘Insiders’ and ‘Outsiders’’, in Marie Smyth and Gillian Robinson, *Researching Violently Divided Societies: Ethical and Methodological Issues*, New York, United Nations University Press, [n.d.], p. 77.

²³ *Ibid.*: p. 82.

seem geographically peripheral when viewed from a Namibian national perspective, but it can be seen as geographically central when viewed from a more regional African perspective.

The book is divided into two parts. Chapters two to five examine contests in the construction of the Caprivi identities. Chapters six to nine are concerned with attempts to deconstruct Caprivi identities, and the counter attempts to reinforce these identities (which have been linked to calls for secession). Different questions about Caprivi identities will be examined in the various chapters of the book. After the Introduction the discussion in chapter two focuses on the contest to control the Caprivi as a space and its people during the pre-colonial period. This involved outside powers such as the Aluyi (Lozi), the Makololo of Sebetwane, the Batawana, and the Matebele (Ndebele) of Mzilikazi. Caprivi offered a safe haven or refuge for these groups because of its natural environment, bounded by rivers and providing enough grazing pasture and fields for cultivation. While the aim in this chapter is to show the nature of conquest, betrayal and rivalry that characterized pre-colonial Caprivi, two important points emerge: firstly, that the depiction of the inhabitants of the Caprivi as 'slaves' or 'little serfs', almost to the level of sub-humanity in contemporary pre-colonial historiography is misplaced. The impression created that the people of Caprivi 'resigned' themselves to the suffering and disdain inflicted upon them by the conquering powers, especially the Lozi and Makololo, is refuted. I will demonstrate in this chapter that the 'colonized' attempted to regain their independence at various stages in their relationship with their masters, even if this meant betraying one master and paying allegiance to the other. 'In all of the colonized there is a fundamental need for change.'²⁴ I have shown that it is untenable to think that the colonized inhabitants of Caprivi could have been expected to 'disappear' into their master, to become Lozi. Lozi and Kololo subjugation of the inhabitants of Caprivi was tantamount to 'colonialism', and should be classified as such. The Lozi regime especially was as exploitative and cruel, if not more so,²⁵ than later colonial powers. 'There are neither good nor bad colonists – there are colonists.'²⁶ Contemporary historiography on Caprivi does not acknowledge this; it concentrates on glorifying the 'powerful Lozi' kingdom and its expansion southwards. Resistance to Lozi expansion is never discussed as part of citizenship and subjectivity in the Lozi state.

²⁴ Memmi, Albert. *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Expanded Edition: Introduction by Jean-Paul Sartre; Afterword by Susan Gilson Miller). Boston: Beacon Press, 1965, p. 119.

²⁵ See descriptions in Pretorius, J., 'The Fwe of Eastern Caprivi Zipfel: A Study of their Historical and Geographical Background, Tribal Structure and Legal System, with reference to the Fwe Family Law and Succession' (MA, University of Stellenbosch, 1975).

²⁶ In an Introduction to Albert Memmi's book, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, p. xxv.

Chapter two will seek to provide answers to the following questions: What were the pre-colonial or pre-Caprivi identities and what role did these play in shaping later Caprivianness? What was the nature of societal relations in the pre-colonial space that became the Caprivi and what was the nature of contestations over identities in that space?

Chapters three and four discuss formal colonialism in the Caprivi and the way this was conducted and contested by European imperial powers during the so-called 'Scramble for Africa', which resulted in the 'deals and treaties' that created the Caprivi *Zipfel*. These two chapters discuss the role of state formation during German, British and South African colonial periods, and the influence this had on shaping Caprivi identities. Administratively there were periods of stagnation, isolation and neglect of the Caprivi during the periods 1890-1909, 1909-1914, 1914-1918, 1918-1922, 1922-1929, 1929-1939 and 1939-1964.²⁷ During this time the region was managed at the local level by one European official with an assistant, while the provision of education and health services became the responsibility of missionaries from the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) and later the Catholic Capuchin Order. The period 1964 until independence marked a shift from neglect to intense focus, with the publication of the Odendaal Commission's Report in 1964 and the implementation of a roadmap towards Caprivi self-governing status.

While a major conclusion is that distinct Caprivi identities are a result of prolonged neglect, chapters three and four focus on the impact that the colonial period had on shaping Caprivi identities. The following questions are raised: What role did state formation play in the construction of Caprivi identities? How was the Caprivi administered? How did the nature of different colonial administrations contribute towards a Caprivian sense of being on the periphery or in the centre, in relation to both Namibian state formation and to central southern Africa?

Chapter three deals with the period 1890 to 1939. The major characteristic of this period was the transferability of the Caprivi from one colonial master to the next for administrative purposes. The chapter considers how this contributed to the formation of Caprivi identities.

Chapter four is concerned with the years 1939 to 1982. During most of this period the Caprivi was administered directly from Pretoria through the Union of South Africa's Department of Native Affairs. This period can usefully be subdivided into two parts, i) the period of the Bantu reserve (1939 -1964) which was characterized by neglect in all spheres; and ii) the Bantustan period (1964 -1980) which saw the implementation of the Odendaal Commission's recommendations for Caprivi self-government. In this latter period the Capri-

²⁷ These different periods imply differences and changes in administrative control in Caprivi, which are explained in this book.

vi was the subject of intense interest by the administration. The chapter asks how this shift, from total neglect to intense focus over a period of less than half a century, affected and helped construct or deconstruct Caprivi identities?

During the early part of the period of Caprivi colonial administration, the provision of education and health services was generally left in the hands of the Seventh Day Adventist and, later, Catholic missionaries. The general trend of both missions was to apply Northern Rhodesia's (the name for the British colony that became Zambia at independence) school curricula in the Caprivi schools. Written examinations were those of Northern Rhodesia, and the officials who inspected schools in the Caprivi were from Northern Rhodesia. In addition, all illnesses of a serious nature were referred to hospitals in Northern Rhodesia. The impact that this would have had on the construction of Caprivi identities is interrogated.

Chapter five describes the Caprivi as a contested frontier and asks what the nature of this frontier was, and what its constituent elements were? The frontier is described mainly in terms of labour migrancy and its use as a military frontier. I examine the effect these aspects had on the consolidation of Caprivi identities. Did the routes of migrant labour point towards or away from South West Africa/Namibia, and the effect this would have had on Caprivi identities?

Chapter six discusses the form Caprivi identities took at the local level and the way these were consolidated. Did these local identities compete with one another and did this competition evolve into contestation? Finally, what form did such contestation take and what issues provided a catalyst for conflicts?

The last three chapters, seven, eighth and nine are devoted to the African responses to Caprivi identities, past and present. In chapter seven the rise of Caprivi nationalism is examined, specifically the formation of the Caprivi African National Union (CANU). The following questions are asked: was the rise of CANU a direct response to isolated Caprivi identities, how was CANU formed, what were the issues the nationalists were concerned with, how did this threaten Caprivi identities and how does Caprivi regional nationalism fit into broader Namibian nationalism?

Chapter eight looks at the state response to the threat to Caprivi identities embodied in the rise of CANU. The focus is on political repression, particularly the arrest, detention and disappearance of Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye, founder president of CANU. It asks what happened to him after his arrest in 1964, where was he taken and, if he was killed, where was his body taken?

Chapter nine is concerned with Caprivi identities in the present: Are they still being constructed and, if so, what form does this take? Is the contestation over this present construction ongoing and is secession a direct result of the construction of Caprivi identities of the

past? Finally, the question is asked whether there is a historical basis for Caprivi secession? Chapter ten provides a brief summary of the conclusions of the study.

This book, therefore, seeks to determine how Caprivi identities were constructed in the past, whether such construction still continues in the present, what contestations over Caprivi identities emerged and whether pre-colonial identities laid a foundation that shaped later Caprivi identities?

Ethnic Terminology

The colonial archives contain a confusing range of ethnic labels that were applied to people living in the Caprivi with a range of spellings and misspellings. In this book the terms Lozi, Malozi, Barotse and/or Aluyi are used interchangeably to refer to the same group. Similarly, the term Makololo (or just Kololo) refers to the same group of people under Sebetwane. The inhabitants of the Caprivi were classified into two main groups for administrative purposes, the Subia (also known as Masubia, Subiya, Masubiya, Kuhane or Bekuhane) and the Mafwe (also known as Fwe). The latter group, identified as Bafwe (Bayeyi) between 1909 and 1972, included within its ranks smaller groups such as the Mayeyi (also known as the Yei, Yeyi or Bayeyi), Mbukushu (Mambukushu), Totela (Matotela), Mbalangwe (Mambalangwe), BaMashi (Mashi or Mayuni people) and Barakwena (Barakwengo or San). Reference to these groups will conform to the broad categories of Subiya and Fwe or Masubiya and Mafwe when dealing with the colonial period. In the post independent state, reference to the Mafwe (Fwe) excludes Mayeyi (Yeyi or Yei) and BaMashi (Mayuni), since these are now independent chieftaincies.

It is clear from the above that this book deals with a multiplicity of ethnic identities and in a way with the creation of ethnicity in Caprivi. As Royce contends, ethnicity results from the existence of more than one ethnic group in a given society and that at times ethnic identity can be the product of increased inter-group interaction.²⁸ I therefore begin by defining the concepts 'ethnic identity', 'ethnic group', 'ethnicity' and 'national identity'.

Royce defines an ethnic group as a 'reference group that may share common values, beliefs, and history. Through the process of interaction members come to identify themselves as sharing a certain style.'²⁹ As for ethnic identity, Royce defines it as 'the total of the feeling, beliefs, and history that identify the members as being part of a distant past.'³⁰ To accept the above definitions in the context of this study presents difficulties such as the risk of reading

²⁸ Royce, Anya Peterson, *Ethnic Identity: Strategies of Diversity*. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1982, p. 40.

²⁹ Royce, 1982, p. 18.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

some of these contemporary identities back into the 17th or 18th centuries and negotiating issues related to borders of exclusion and inclusion in the construction of identities from above by the state, or from below by the people themselves. For Anthony D. Smith, there are two extreme views on ethnicity, those who find a primordial quality in ethnicity, which 'exists outside time', and those who see ethnicity as 'situational', dependent on the individual's situation and open to instrumental manipulation by competing elites.³¹ Smith chooses to stress the 'historical and symbolic-cultural attributes of ethnic identity'.³² In this sense it is fairly clear that there were 'Subiya', 'Mafwe', Mayeyi and other ethnic groups in Caprivi in the 18th century and before. The implications of this, however could vary, 'Identities are relational, they are different at different times, and they are contested, and hence, unstable.'³³

An oft-quoted writer on the theme of identities, Benedict Anderson, coined the concept 'imagined communities'.³⁴ Are the above identities 'imagined'? Anderson is largely irrelevant here as he dealt with national as opposed to ethnic identities. For Anderson 'imagined communities' did not mean these were 'fabricated' or 'invented'. He described the nation as 'an imagined political community' because the 'members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.'³⁵ For Anderson all communities other than primordial villages with face-to-face contact are in fact imagined.³⁶ There is a danger of adapting much of what Anderson writes to suit circumstances in Africa since his examples are mainly from Asia, again as observed by Palmberg:

On a more general level we have seen how the authorities on national identity, Anthony D. Smith and Benedict Anderson, do have much to tell us, but also leave us largely without analytical tools when it comes to Africa. More research is needed on 'the special cases' represented by Africa.

Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' can perhaps be better employed here in the context of dismantling 'Caprivi nationalism' and secession. According to Smith, the central idea of nationalism is that 'nations exist from time immemorial and that nationalists must

³¹ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1991, p. 20.

³² *Ibid.*: p. 20.

³³ Mai Palmberg, 'Introduction', in Palmberg, M., (ed.), *National Identity and Democracy in Africa*, Uppsala, The Human Sciences Research Council of SA, the Mayibuye Centre at the University of the Western Cape and the Nordic Africa Institute, 1999, p. 14.

³⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London and New York, 1992. (The book was first published in 1983, the revised and enlarged edition in 1991.)

³⁵ *Ibid.*: p. 6.

³⁶ Palmberg, 1999, p. 11.

reawaken them from their slumber to take their place in a world of nations.’³⁷ Similarly, a Chatham House report defines nationalism as ‘a consciousness, on the part of individuals or groups, of membership in a nation, or of a desire to forward the strength, liberty or prosperity of a nation...’³⁸

Based on the above definitions of nationalism and without engaging in in-depth discussion on how new nations come to be imagined, it becomes impractical to think of a Caprivi ‘national identity’, as professed by the secessionists. To begin with, the spatial identity of what is today Caprivi did not exist since time immemorial. It is a colonial creation just as any modern African state is, the results of colonial rivalries, partition conferences and conquests. National identity for Smith is founded in culture and involves both cultural ideas such as ideas on common ancestry or history and cultural symbols such as monuments, poetry and architecture. I will show how historically different events have contributed to the divisive and contested identities of contemporary Caprivi and that with such diverse ethnic backgrounds the claim to common ancestry cannot be imagined. If Caprivi nationalism manages to invent a nation where it does not exist, myths of ethnic origin will definitely not form the ideological basis of its imagined multi-ethnic state.

Sources and Methodology

This study is informed by ‘revisionist’ historiography, more especially Marxist social history of the 1980s with its strong emphasis on ‘history from below’.³⁹ Such an approach is necessary to break contemporary trends that view the history of Caprivi through the lens of Lozi and Kololo subjugation and portray ‘Caprivians’ as a ‘Lozi underclass’. Emphasis on social history does not, however, mean ignoring the structuralist scholarship of the 1970s, the primary concern of which was with questions of theory, of state and capital accumulation. As Nefale observes, ‘the lives of ordinary men are tied by a conflicting relationship with the state, particularly after the demise of independent African chiefdoms that led many Africans to flock to the cities and their confinement to the reserves’.⁴⁰ A study seeking to portray ‘history from below’ would undoubtedly benefit from the use of oral sources. Unfortunately, current political conditions in the Caprivi are not conducive for oral interviews on sensitive themes such as identity, secession, and regional nationalism. Apart

³⁷ Smith, 1991, pp. 19-20.

³⁸ See the ‘Introductory’, in Hodgkin, Thomas, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*, London, Frederick Muller, 1956, p. 20.

³⁹ B. Bozzoli. *Class, Community and Conflict*. (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1987), pp. xiii-xx.

⁴⁰ M. Nefale. ‘The Politics of Land in Levubu, Northern Province, c.1935-1998’ (MA Thesis, UCT, 2000).

from the ongoing treason trial, the current land dispute between the two main groups in the area, the Mafwe and Masubiya, makes oral interviewing very difficult.

I have, however, done extensive oral history research in 2006 and 2007 for the present study and three other related projects that complement and complete gaps in written materials. The first is a three-phased project on the life history of Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye sponsored by the Archives of Anti-Colonial Resistance and Liberation Struggle Project (AACRLS) of the National Archives of Namibia (NAN). Phase One of this project involved the compilation of a comprehensive study of the literature, mainly archival sources on Simbwaye and the history of regional nationalism in Caprivi, particularly the formation of the Caprivi African National Union (CANU). Phase Two consisted of oral interviews with family, friends, work colleagues and political acquaintances of Brendan Simbwaye in Caprivi as well as in other parts of Namibia.

The second project I am involved in concerns the current land dispute between the Mafwe and Masubiya Traditional Authorities involving ownership of the Muyako area. In early 2007 the Head of State, President Hifikepunye Pohamba, issued a Presidential Decree based on the recommendations of the Council of Traditional Leaders that a disputed piece of land, which includes Lake Lyambezi, was to fall under the Masubiya Traditional Authority. The Mafwe Traditional Authority contested that decision on the basis that the right procedures were not followed before the decision was taken and asked the High Court of Namibia to set aside the decree. As the case involves digging deep into the past to determine ancient rights to Muyako, I have taken a keen interest in following developments both in the High Court and at the traditional courts, where oral histories are presented by elderly informants to strengthen the cases on both sides. Information from these sessions, which I captured in tape recordings and handwritten notes, was very useful for the chapters dealing with pre-colonial Caprivi and on contested identities and rival histories. Much of the construction, especially the display of these oral histories, takes place during annual cultural festivals held by the traditional authorities, at which song and dance are mingled with narrations (mainly triumphant) of the past of legends, traditions, heroes and heroines. To put these traditional festivals into historical perspective, I published an article in response to one that had appeared earlier on the subject, in which I argued that 'traditional festivals' in the Caprivi in the form in which they exist was an imposed initiative of apartheid South Africa in celebration of Republic Day. The article, 'Andrew Matjila and Traditional Festivals in the Caprivi: The other side of the coin'⁴¹ emphasized that festivals in this form were one

⁴¹ In *New Era*, 6 October 2006.

of many projects undertaken by South Africa to further isolate and strengthen Caprivi identities to serve its 'nation building' (ie. 'Bantustans') project.

The present study also benefited in many ways from focus group and informal discussions I engaged in during fieldwork in the Caprivi while gathering information in the course of writing research papers: 'The evolution of mission education and health provision in the Eastern Caprivi Strip: 1920s to 1960s' is an unpublished joint paper with Gilbert Likando of the Education Department of the University of Namibia, while two other papers were written in 2006 in conjunction with Wolfgang Zeller of the Institute of Development Studies in Finland. One of these, 'From Apartheid Bantustan to Namibia's Socio-economic Tail-Light: Caprivi Under Old and New Indirect Rule' is published in a book⁴² edited by Henning Melber. 'From Apartheid Garrison to Transnational Boomtown: Katima Mulilo Before and After Namibian Independence' was presented at the Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association (ASA) in San Francisco, USA, in 2006.

The last project from which the present study benefited in terms of oral interviews is the SADC Secretariat Research: Hashim Mbita Project (SSRHMP). This records the history of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa. I was contracted by the Namibia Chapter of the Project to conduct interviews with participants in the liberation war from the Caprivi Region on their behalf.

From the interviews undertaken, it was apparent that many of the oral histories in the Caprivi are diluted by textbook histories. The dividing line between the two has grown very thin. For this reason over-reliance on oral interviews would affect the credibility of any research project, but the limitations of oral evidence, such as lack of chronology, numbers and locality, need to be 'remedied by recourse to outside sources.'⁴³ It is to these 'outside sources' that I now turn.

Most of my archival research was undertaken in the National Archives of Namibia, where files related to the Caprivi during the South West Africa Administration (SWAA) are held. Among the most useful are Caprivi Native Affairs and Magistrate (CNAM); Commissioner Eastern Caprivi (KCA); Magistrate Katima Mulilo (LKM); and the Bantu Administration Files (BAD). The last named were particularly useful on the chapter dealing with CANU, for they contain letters between Brendan Simbwaye and Israel Goldblatt, an advocate who was active in defending political prisoners in South West Africa. In addition, and related to the Simbwaye-Goldblatt connection, I received a transcript of material related to the two

⁴² Melber, Henning (ed.), *Cross-Examining Transitions in Namibia: Socio-Economic and Ideological Transformation since Independence*, Upssala, Nordic Africa Institute, 2007.

⁴³ J. Vansina. *Oral Tradition as History*. London: James Currey, 1985, p. 187.

from Dag Henrichsen of the Basler Afrika Bibliographien, who was working on the Israel Goldblatt papers.⁴⁴

Particularly important in the National Archives of Namibia were nine boxes of archival material on the history of the Caprivi, recently donated by Mr. Andrew Theunissen of the Attorneys Theunissen, Louw and Partners (thanks to the good offices of Antje Otto-Reiner, who organized and listed the material). The documents were compiled in the context of an intended court case to clarify the issue of the boundary between the Mafwe and the Masubiya traditional authorities in the early 1980s. Even though the case never went to court, the attorneys managed to put together useful documents on the history of the Caprivi that include copies from historical and ethnological literature, minutes of meetings, correspondence, statements, photographs and a map showing a proposed boundary between the two groups.

The National Archives of Namibia has received material from the South African National Archives in Pretoria dealing with the period when the Caprivi was administered directly from Pretoria. Another invaluable resource was that of private collections, in this case, the Log Book, in three volumes, of the Holy Family Mission at Katima Mulilo. This covers the period 1943 – 1994 and incorporates the general history of the Caprivi, church history, education and health and most interestingly, church-state relations in the history of the Caprivi.

For the pre-colonial period a trip to the Zambia National Archives in Lusaka proved valuable. I could not make a trip to the National Archives in Botswana, but received photocopies of materials on Caprivi held in that archive from my colleagues Jeremy Silvester and Werner Hillebrecht. Particularly useful was recently de-classified material from the Botswana President's office, which sheds light on the relationship between SWAPO and CANU in Lusaka, a subject not often talked about and the alleged source of secessionist attempts in Caprivi.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of a study such as this are apparent. Available material, although valuable, is patchy and limited in scope to certain selected aspects of Caprivi's history. It is limited geographically to what came to be known as the Caprivi Strip after the 1890 Anglo-German Treaty which, however, ignores the fact that the areas of an ethnic group straddle the borders of more than one country. Nonetheless, the book provides a rich source of valuable material on the making of Caprivi identities, WNLA, the careers of Brendan Simbwaye and

⁴⁴ Israel Goldblatt: *Building Bridges. Namibian nationalists Clemens Kapuuu, Hosea Kutako, Brendan Simbwaye, Samuel Witbooi*. Edited by Dag Henrichsen, Naomi Jacobson & Karen Marshall. Basel, 2010.

Mishake Muyongo, the emergence of CANU and its relationship with SWAPO. The topic is timely for broader scholarship and particularly pertinent for Namibia in view of the current Treason Trial of some 100 'Caprivian' Separatists.

Literature Review

There is a general lack of research on the history of the Caprivi region. Most of what exists is in the form of reports compiled by officials working for the colonial state. The information contained in such reports reflects the authors' intentions and bias and is not of a scholarly nature. Information available on the pre-colonial period consists of travelogues (travel literature) by traders, missionaries and trophy hunters. These are often not available in Namibia, but are held by libraries outside the country.

Major works of substance on the history of Caprivi have still to emerge. What does exist are studies dealing with isolated aspects pertaining to the history of the area. In 1972 DM Shamukuni published a 23 page article on the Subiya, 'The Basubiya', in *Botswana Notes and Records* (4, 1972, pp. 161-184) giving useful insights into the history of the Masubiya. Although useful for the present study, his emphasis is on the Masubiya in Botswana rather than in the Caprivi. Shamukuni has been accused of being a 'Subiya historian', among others by Flint.⁴⁵ His work was followed in 1975 by that of Johann Pretorius whose MA thesis submitted to the University of Stellenbosch focused on the Mafwe people of the Caprivi. He looked at their historical and geographical background, tribal structure and legal system. Special reference was made to Mafwe family law and succession. Critics⁴⁶ of Pretorius suggest that he relies too heavily on the narration of a Subiya school principal at Kanono in the Mafwe area in relating the history of the Mafwe and is thus biased towards the Masubiya viewpoint.

In 1984 C.E. Kruger, the longest serving Native Commissioner/Magistrate in Caprivi during the South African period, produced a manuscript on the history of Caprivi, 'History of the Caprivi Strip, 1890-1984'. Although written from an amateurish historical perspective, this contains useful reference material on the history of the Caprivi and was quite helpful in the present study. More bulky, and largely incoherent in presentation, is a manuscript compiled by Ernest Likando in 1989, 'The Caprivi Strip: A historical perspective'. Although rich in assertions that are not sufficiently substantiated, Likando's manuscript nonetheless

⁴⁵ See Flint, L., 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa: Citizenship and Subjectivity in Barotse-land and Caprivi', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 36, Issue 2, 2003.

⁴⁶ See Maritz, Chris, 'The Subia and Fwe of Caprivi: Any Historical Grounds for a Status of *Primus Inter Pares*?' In *Africa Insight*, (An independent publication which promotes insight into the process of change in Africa), vol. 26, no. 2, 1996, pp. 177-185.

provides important pointers for further enquiry into the history of the Caprivi. A major criticism is his over reliance on Subiya oral history, making him biased towards Subiya history.⁴⁷ Sections dealing with the political history of the Caprivi appeared in Pütz, von Egidy and Caplan's 1989 *Namibia Handbook and Political Who's Who*. Caprivi nationalism is, however, portrayed here as an appendix or footnote to Namibian nationalism.

Two scholarly works on Caprivi appeared in 1996, 'Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Eastern Caprivi, Namibia', was the title and theme of an MA Thesis submitted by Leif John Fosse to the Department and Museum of Anthropology of the University of Oslo. Even though his main concern was how the Caprivi is a difficult case for Namibian nationalism, Fosse managed to bring out relevant socio-political-historical issues in the Caprivi, including conflicting claims to history, land disputes, public service appointments and their contestations, and shows these to be products of colonial historical processes and interactions. Fosse's narrative was more anthropological than historical, however, and he failed to critically engage with the literature he quotes.

Chris Maritz's 'The Subia and Fwe of Caprivi', published in *Insight* (26, No. 2, 1996), examined whether there was a historical basis for the Masubiya claim to 'indigenouness' in Caprivi. His conclusion was that there was none. The Mafwe and Masubiya had co-existed in history; there was no proof of domination of one by the other. A major weakness of his analysis is that for him the history of the Caprivi begins in 1909. Before then, the people of the Caprivi were just little 'serfs' of the Lozi and Kololo. This is not surprising since Maritz collected his data during fieldwork in the 1980s, when colonial anthropology informed many publications on the history of Caprivi. He was part of the team that worked on the Mafwe case. Even though short, Maritz's paper is relevant for the purposes of the present study. Both Maritz's work and the present study look at conflict as history in the history of the Caprivi.

The most widely read works on the Caprivi's history relate to the German period, accessible to this researcher thanks mainly to Maria Fisch's two publications in English both published in 1999. The first, *The Caprivi Strip during the German colonial period, 1890-1914*, is detailed in its focus on the achievements of Kurt Streitwolf. The narration in this book, almost along the lines of 'Thank God the Germans came'⁴⁸, credits Streitwolf with 'giving' the people of the Caprivi an 'identity' in the form of more centralized traditional institu-

⁴⁷ See Sehani, M., 'The Mafwe/Mayuni Crisis: Rival Histories and the Assertion of Identity in the Caprivi', Public History: Forgotten History Conference, University of Namibia, 2000.

⁴⁸ Lau, Brigitte. "Thank God the Germans Came": Vedder and Namibian Historiography', in Keith Gottschalk and Christopher Saunders, eds. *African Seminar: Collected papers*, vol. 2 (Cape Town, 1982).

tions. Fisch is silent on loss of identities during this period, especially when the Mafwe ethnic coalition was established and incorporated within its ranks non-Mafwe ethnic groups such as Mayeyi, Mbalangwe, Barakwena (San) and Mbukushu. This despite the fact that by the time of publication Fisch knew that in 1993 the Mayeyi community in the Caprivi had already decided to break away from the above coalition by not accepting Mamili, the Mafwe chief, as their leader.⁴⁹ The same action was taken by the Mayuni community along the Mashi area.⁵⁰ In both communities traditional authorities were recognized and gazetted by the government.

A strength of Maria Fisch's publication is the rich knowledge she demonstrates of archival documents in the National Archives of Namibia relating to the German period. Since she is a German speaker and, given that most of the documents are in the German language, the level of engagement with this source material is critical to non-German speakers doing research on Caprivi history during this period.

In her second publication, *The secessionist movement in the Caprivi: A historical perspective*, which does not draw upon oral interviews, Fisch interprets the above form of identity disintegration as partisan politics, particularly on the part of the ruling SWAPO party. While Fisch asserts correctly that SWAPO benefited in political terms, her argument that if SWAPO had not come into power those communities would not have re-asserted their independent identities is a limited one. A major weakness of Fisch and other researchers on Caprivi history is to make the history and people of the Caprivi extensions of cross-border history. In explaining settlement history in the Caprivi, for example, it is suggested that the people of Caprivi were Lozi, and by implication did not exist as separate entities or have identities of their own. Their histories and cultures are taken to be so intrinsic to Lozi history and traditions that they do not seem to have perceptions of themselves as separate from this, either in the past or the present.

Fisch's two books were followed by Wolfgang Zeller's useful paper, 'Interests and Socio-economic development in the Caprivi region from a historical perspective', a *NEPRU Occasional Paper* (19, May 2000). This study discusses divergent colonial economic interests in the making of the Caprivi and places these in their historical context.

In 2003, Lawrence Flint published a very useful account of the history of the old Lozi kingdom as it encompassed Caprivi, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa: Citizenship and Subjectivity in Barotseland and Caprivi', in the *International Journal of African Histori-*

⁴⁹ Sasa, D., 'The Mayeyi Chieftainship', Paper presented at the 'Public History: Forgotten History' Conference hosted by the History Department of the University of Namibia, 2000.

⁵⁰ See Sehani, M., 'The Mafwe/Mayuni Crisis: Rival Histories and the Assertion of Identity in the Caprivi', Public History: Forgotten History Conference, University of Namibia, 2000.

cal Studies, 36, 2, 2003, based on a doctoral thesis on the same subject that he submitted to the University of Birmingham in 2002. Even though his PhD is not available in Namibian libraries, core chapters are posted on his website, which is dedicated to the 'preservation of Lozi culture and traditions'. Flint is the first to argue for the centrality and importance of the Caprivi, as a space, to the survival and existence of Buluzi. He shows how the quality of life in Zambia's western province was affected by the excision of the Caprivi from the kingdom in 1909. This is relevant to the present study in that it supports the assertion that the Caprivi is strategically located and that it is this geographical positioning that had placed it under contestation since pre-colonial times.

Some of Flint's ideas are challenged in the present study. These ideas include his views on subjectivity and citizenship as aspects of state formation or 'state-building'. The inhabitants of Caprivi were citizens of Buluzi and subjects of Lozi kings, however, this did not make them Lozis, nor did they lose themselves in the category 'Lozi'. To assert, as Flint does in his conclusion to the paper, that people started losing their Lozi identity from the German period, and that it was only then that group identities such as Subia, Yeyi and Mbukushu 're-surfaced' and took precedence over 'Loziness', is misplaced. What Flint neglects in his analysis is the fact that resistance is an integral part of subjectivity in state formation. The basic question is how the inhabitants of the Caprivi responded to Lozi occupation and expansion. The present study argues that the inhabitants of the Caprivi tried at various periods in their history, including while under the Lozi, to re-assert their autonomy. Similarly, the argument that divergent economic developmental processes made these people choose the above group identities over Lozi-ness needs further substantiation. What about the Masubiya or Matotela people who still reside in Zambia's western province? Do they regard themselves as Lozis and not Subiya or Totela because they have nothing to lose? Can identities be interpreted only in economic terms? If that were the case, 'Caprivians' would not be fighting to secede from Namibia because they have everything to lose economically by such a move.

Flint applies the terms 'Lozi' and Lozi-land loosely to 'Caprivians' and the Caprivi. The present study takes issue with the description of Caprivi as a 'no man's land', in other words, to give ancestral rights of ownership to Lozi kings rather than to the inhabitants of the Caprivi. I argue that the Lozi royals were occupiers who were bound, just like the European colonizers after them, to be overthrown at some point. It is this description of the Caprivi as a Lozi land that often leads commentators to equate Caprivi secession with separatist tendencies in Barotseland as a 'Lozi thing'. Flint describes the two as forms of 'nationalism', which begs the question which 'nation' in terms of the Caprivi? While Lozi might be a more homogenous identity in the Caprivi, opinions are divided along ethnic and political lines. Flint's assertion assumes the people of Caprivi are united behind calls for secession. This

has not been empirically established and it is not surprising to find that he undertook his oral research mainly among refugees of the United Democratic Party (UDP) in Botswana and by interviewing the leaders who were given refuge in Denmark.

Thirdly, Flint's research, like others before him, did not break new ground in the periodization of Caprivi history. He conforms to the old Lozi, Kololo, Lozi restoration, followed by European colonization periodization and again adopts C.E. Kruger's myth that the coming of the Europeans is 'of the greatest significance to these parts...'. This begs the question, most significant to whom in terms of local history? Such a periodization fails to recognize that there were social and political formations in the Caprivi before the Lozi invasion. In this sense when contemporary historiography speaks of local history, this automatically becomes Lozi and Kololo history. The rest were just servants but, of course, even servants have a past.

Lastly, the fact that Flint conducted most of his fieldwork in Barotseland in western Zambia and not in the Caprivi adds another dimension to what he writes about the Caprivi. Even though he states (in footnote 56) that he undertook fieldwork in the Caprivi, where village elders pointed out Sekeletu's burial site, he makes a simple historical mistake. He states (footnote 48) that Sebetwane's body was taken to Naliele in Barotseland for burial after his death in the Caprivi. The present study shows that Sebetwane was buried on an island in the Caprivi. It is surprising that the 'village elders' did not point this out to Flint on his visit.

Research by students from the Caprivi is emerging very slowly. At the August 2000 'Public History: Forgotten History' Conference hosted by the History Department of the University of Namibia, two student papers from the department were presented. David Sasa (now deceased) looked at Mayeyi identity in the Caprivi and Botswana. The Mayeyi/Wayeyi in both countries re-asserted their autonomy from the Mafwe and Tawana domination in 1993 and 1999 respectively. Michael Sehani looked at the Mafwe breakaway and the Mayuni community of the Mashi area in the Caprivi. Both papers are useful starting points on the political histories of the two communities. The present work is the first full-scale academic study of the Caprivi to be written to date.

2 Pre-Colonial Caprivi: Conquest, Betrayal and Rivalry

Colonial administrative control in the Caprivi was largely informed by negative perceptions of both the land and its people. While the land was presented as unhealthy, malaria-ridden and useless, its inhabitants were classified as neither prepossessing nor attractive, 'wandering Bushmen' who showed no tendency to abandon their own customs.¹ Clearly, these customs were considered to be primitive, or even worse, non-existent. In his 1938 Inspection Report, the local Magistrate, Major Trollope, concluded that the tribes that inhabited the Caprivi had no real background of tradition. Sentiments that would be reproduced repeatedly over the generations, most notably by the long-serving colonial official Kruger, who added that since the people of the Caprivi had until comparatively recently been 'a subject people', they 'consequently have no background'.²

The pre-colonial and colonial history of the Caprivi is filled with stories of servitude in the current historiography, particularly under Lozi and Kololo domination. More recently, Lawrence Flint has sought to reconstruct the 'Lozi State' as it encompassed Caprivi. While he emphasized that the Caprivi (space or land) played a significant and central role in the expansion and existence of Barotseland and the Lozi state, Flint's discussion of the inhabitants of Caprivi and their role within the Lozi state is weak. Flint seems too eager to conclude that 'Caprivians' were Lozis at this stage, and that it was the advent of European colonization alone that made them develop their separate identities. Most colonial administrative reports on the Caprivi conclude that the constitution of tribal groupings in the area dates back to the arrival of the Germans. Kruger, for example, writes that 'It is true the constitution of the two tribes must be regarded as dating back to the coming of the German Administration in 1909'.³ Therefore under Lozi and Kololo domination, he suggests, the subordinate peoples were not even communities. I would argue that even vassals have a history and a community of memory, which is a shared reflection of past experiences – both painful and celebratory.

Generally there were two kinds of traditional political organizations in pre-colonial Caprivi: centralized states, with political authority vested in the hands of hereditary rulers (such as in the case of Itenge), and more egalitarian decentralized communities, where po-

¹ Trollope, L.F. Report on the Administration of the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel, 1940, p.11 (NAN: 2267, A 503/1-7).

² Kruger, 1940, pp. 11-12.

³ Kruger, 1963, p. 4; see also his submission to the Budack Commission.

litical power was regulated by interactions among kinship groups, such as clans or lineage, or was maintained by elders in an age-set system. The latter was the more dominant. In centralized states leadership was by a select few based on hereditary claims. Competition and conflicts for the throne existed. Judicial systems were well established.

In decentralized societies, the lineage of clan formed the political units. Heads of lineages exercised authority in such a way that elders could cooperate and arrive at consensus. Judicial and religious authority lay with certain people. Despite a slight patrilineal bias, kinship in Caprivi is established bilaterally, with relatives traced as widely as possible through both consanguineal and affinal ties.⁴ Cousin terminology is Hawaiian terminology and the first ascending generation is bifurcate merging. Kin terms used for the first ascending generation are used for members of the third ascending generation as well. In contrast, members of the second and fourth ascending generations are all lumped together under a single kin term.

The division of labour in subsistence pursuits largely followed along gendered lines. Men were responsible for livestock, hunting, most of the fishing, and the more arduous agricultural tasks; while women did most of the work in agriculture and collecting, a little fishing, and most of the routine domestic chores. Women played dynamic and varied roles. Women were essential participants in religious and economic affairs. They dominated areas of the economy - controlling facets of agricultural production, the flow of commerce and a wide variety of industries and crafts. Women milled flour, preserved food, built houses, manufactured clothing and ornaments, brewed beer, established markets and composed songs, poetry and stories. In earlier times economic exchange was effected through barter and redistribution by the king. Today the people of Caprivi are part of a fully fledged cash economy with market mechanisms.

This chapter will briefly examine societal relations in pre-colonial Caprivi and essentially argues for existence of pre-colonial political formations in the Caprivi. Emphasis will be placed on the claim by the Masubiya that an old Subiya Kingdom they named Iteenge⁵ ex-

⁴ Consanguineal ties imply being 'of the same blood' or denoting people descending from the same ancestor. Affinal ties imply being related by marriage or other family relationships. The Hawaiian cousin system implies that siblings and cousins of the same sex are terminologically indistinguishable. Bifurcate merging implies that parallel aunts and uncles are merged terminologically.

⁵ As expressed elsewhere, the most critical of authors in regard to the origin and existence of the name Iteenge is Maria Fisch. In her publication *The Secessionist Movement in the Caprivi: A Historical Perspective* (NSS: 1999), Fisch dedicated a whole section to this issue (pp. 46-47), which she claimed was intended to 'reveal the origin' of the name. However, not much is revealed, apart from the claim that Iteenge was not in Caprivi but denoted an area regularly raided by the Subiya Chief Nsundano. Fisch does not name the sources of her 'revelation', apart from 'two very old and respected experts on tribal history' that have informed her analysis. Respected by whom and

isted before Lozi and Kololo domination. This claim is often dismissed by many commentators who argue that it is doubtful the Subiya ever had an entirely independent status.⁶ Apart from examining the Subiya claim, the chapter traces the development of other chieftainships in the Caprivi, namely Mamili, Mayuni and Shifu (of the 'Mafwe', BaMashi or 'Mafwe proper' and Mayeyi respectively). Lozi and Kololo domination will be briefly discussed in so far as this impacts on events in the Caprivi.

Subiya-Lozi Relations

Not much is recorded on the history of the Caprivi prior to Lozi domination. Apart from factors such as the late arrival of outside (particularly European⁷) influence and cross border migration, the area's relatively small size⁸ meant that its history was intertwined with that of surrounding territories. Thus historians have tended to read and rely heavily on historiography pertaining particularly to Barotseland in an attempt to make sense of matters and events in the pre-colonial Caprivi. Even when, as Kruger observes, the events discussed hardly feature 'tribes' in Caprivi, the centre of events was generally more to the north.⁹ One key source was a study made in 1909 by the Reverend A. Jalla, C.B.E. of the Paris Mission-

experts on which tribal history, one may well ask. Even then, she does not directly credit these two as the sources on this particular issue. She claims that the first mention of Itenge was in Shamu-kuni's 1972 publication. This is refuted elsewhere in this book. While she accuses Shamu-kuni of 'strong patriotic undertone and being unreliable', the same can be said of her when she appears to suggest that the use of the name Itenge instead of the Caprivi is 'unfortunate'. Since she is of German descent, the preservation of the name 'Caprivi', and all it represents carries patriotic undertones. It is rather disingenuous of her to describe Nsundano's raids on neighboring communities to capture cattle and people to swell his ranks as 'theft'; surely any scholar of pre-colonial times would know this was the order of the day, a kind of survival tactic that defined and strengthened societies? When communities in the Caprivi were at the receiving end of such raids from the Lozi and Kololo, the same writers ascribe this to the fact that the raided communities were weak and not centrally organized, which pointed to the ingenuity of the conquering forces. The fact that Fisch links the name Itenge with Chief Nsundano is most telling, regardless of the area it denoted, because this is precisely in agreement with the Subiya assertion that it was Chief Nsundano who established the Subiya Kingdom of Itenge. Fisch would agree therefore that it is difficult to discuss Nsundano without mention of Itenge, and vice-versa.

⁶ See among others: Kruger, C., 'History of the Caprivi Strip, 1890-1984', 1984 (NAN: A.472), Kruger, C.E., 'The Eastern Caprivi Strip', 1963, p. 5 (NAN: P/B0139), and Maritz, Chris, 'The Subiya and Fwe of Caprivi: Any Historical Grounds for a Status of Primus Inter Pares?', *Africa Insight*, vol. 26, no. 2, 1996, pp. 177-185.

⁷ The first recorded significant visit was by David Livingstone in 1851.

⁸ The Caprivi Region is c.300 miles (480 km) long and 50 miles (80 km) wide.

⁹ Kruger, History of Caprivi, Chapter 2, p. 2, 1984.

ary Society, *Litaba za Sicaba sa Malozi*, translated as *The Story of the Barotse Nation*.¹⁰ It is significant to record that Jalla's work was read to the *Kuta* (Traditional Court) of the Lozi before it was published, and wholly approved by them,¹¹ making it safe to conclude that Jalla's account, which would form the basis of Lozi history and influence other accounts on the subject,¹² is a Lozi narrative. What the work says about events in the Caprivi especially kingships and societal relations should therefore be critically assessed.

It is to this publication that I turn to gain deeper insights into the subject of the relations between the Masubiya and the Lozi. The Lozi were primarily attracted to what Flint calls the 'Bulozi floodplain' by the availability of grazing pastures, prospects for reed cutting, fishing and the suitability of certain areas for making winter gardens.¹³ They eventually proceeded further downstream to conquer the Caprivi, When the Aluyi¹⁴ arrived, the Subiya and the other groups had already occupied these parts and therefore the Aluyi (Lozi) conquest brought about displacement and, to some extent, forced migration. The first recorded encounter between the Subiya and Aluyi (Lozi) appears to be during the reign of Mwanambinyi, a young brother of Mwanasilundu, the first Lozi king, also known as Mboo. Jalla records that Mwanambinyi broke away from Mwanasilundu and moved downstream along the Zambezi to establish his kingdom at Senanga.¹⁵ According to reports Mwanambinyi then waged war against the Mbukushu and Subiya at Nakabunze (Katima Mulilo) and at Longa Island causing Chief Liswani of the Subiya to flee to Kazungula. Cheete of the

¹⁰ See A. Jalla, 'History: Traditions and Legends of the Barotse Nation' (1909), an original typescript held, according to Lawrence Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa: Citizenship and Subjectivity in Barotseland and Caprivi', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 36, issue 2, 2003, p. 399), at the Institute of Economic and Social Research (NESOR), Lusaka, 7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹² See among others, A. Jalla's later version of this work: 'History, Tradition and Legends of the Barotse People' (Colonial Office, African No. 1179, 1921); M. Mainga, 'The origin of the Lozi: Some Oral Traditions', in E. Stokes and R. Brown, eds, *The Zambesian Past: Studies in Central African History* (Manchester, 1966), pp.238-47; *Bulozi Under the Luyana Kings* (London, 1973), and more recently, L. Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa: Citizenship and Subjectivity in Barotseland and Caprivi', in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 36, no. 2 (2003), pp. 393-428.

¹³ J.H. Venning, 'Newly acquired country between the Zambezi and Mashu Rivers' p. 6 (NAN: A. 589).

¹⁴ Now known as Lozi.

¹⁵ In Chris Maritz, *The Subia and Fwe of Caprivi*, 1996, p. 178 after A. Jalla, *History of the Malozi*, (a translation of the writer's work *Litaba za Sicaba sa Malozi*, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1921), p. 4.; See also M. Gluckman, 'The Lozi of Barotseland in Northwestern Rhodesia', in E. Colson and M. Gluckman (eds.) *Seven tribes of British Central Africa*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959, p. 2; M. Mainga, *Bulozi under the Luyana Kings*, London: Longman, 1973, p. 24.

Mbukushu fled with his followers to Butoka.¹⁶ Mwanambinyi's son, Mulia, continued his father's terror campaigns as far as Mwandi (old Sesheke) where he conquered the Subiya and brought them with their chief, Mwanamwale, to Senanga and settled the Mbukushu on Sitoti and Mbeta Islands.¹⁷ Thus this encounter between the Subiya and Aluyi (Lozi) was not cordial. Apart from effectively subjugating the Subiya by capturing their chief and taking him prisoner to Senanga, the Aluyi (Lozi) were determined to destroy the Subiya chieftainship. There appears to have been a deliberate attempt made, especially on the part of the Lozi royals, to suppress Subiya history. Flint records that when the British colonial administrators were trying to write a history of the region with the help of Lewanika, the king was most anxious that they should not leave out the history of Mwanambinyi's conquests over the Caprivi, 'in particular over Subia', which the British had apparently tried to do because of the 'magical' content in the story.¹⁸ This was, Flint believes, 'in order to eliminate

¹⁶ *Op cit.* p. 26. Chief Liswani of the Masubiya and Cheete of the Mbukushu lived together at Nakabunze, where the famous Baobab or toilet tree is found, now in Katima Mulilo. Some historians misconstrue the fact that Chief Liswani lived with Cheete of the Mbukushu at Katima Mulilo to mean that Subiyas are of Mbukushu origin. Flint (2003:398) quotes his 'Lozi historians' as stating that Subia people were once part of the Mbukushu before they were dispersed by Mwanambinyi. This dispersal may only account for the movement of one Subiya splinter group, possibly one under Chief Liswani and does not necessarily represent the origin of the Subiya as a group. There is no conclusive evidence to this effect. There are at least two versions pointing to the 'myths of origin' of the Subiya. That both myths place them together with the Mbukushu, does not inevitably imply that one originated from the other, but rather emphasizes co-existence. One version tells that the Subiya, together with the Yeyi (whom they called Bezanza) and Mbukushu lived at Goha Hills (in Botswana) before they migrated to Caprivi and Kavango respectively (a version which Flint seems not to consider because it is held among others by Shamukuni whom he describes as a 'Subia Historian' by way of discrediting the value of his contribution). The second version, which Flint seems to support, is found in T.J. Larson ('The Hambukushu Migrations to Ngamiland', *African Social Research*, 11[1971], 27-49) and A.St.H. Gibbons (*Africa from North to South through Marotseland* 1[London, 1904], 217-18) who state that the Subiya and Mbukushu lived around the Zambezi at or near Katima Mulilo, and that their leaders fell out over inheritance of rainmaking rights; that Mwanambinyi wanted to end the quarrels and bloodshed and ordered the Mbukushu to leave the Zambezi region from where they migrated to the Mashi. Even though Flint admits that Larson and Gibbons' versions were narrated by Lozi 'royals', he does not adequately engage with the subject. Was he biased towards a Lozi nationalist agenda? That evidently presents Mwanambinyi in the line of 'Thank God the Germans came', otherwise the Subiya and Mbukushu could have finished each other off. For another version of the Subiya myth of origin see Pretorius, J.L., 'The Fwe of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*' (M.A. thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1975), 21, who claims the Subiya lived around the Kafue floodplains where they were called 'Batwa' before they migrated into Caprivi around 1700.

¹⁷ Maritz (1996: 178), after M. Mainga, *Op cit.*, p. 28.

¹⁸ According to Flint, revisions made on the advice of Lewanika are reflected in a revised report: History of Barotseland, Prepared by the Office of the Provincial Commissioner, Mongu, 20 February 1936, KDE 2/44/1, NAZ.

the notion that the Subia had previously exerted influence in Caprivi.¹⁹ It is this history with a 'magical' content that is taught in schools in Barotseland, and readily reproduced by scholars on the Caprivi as testimony to the early history of the area. Thus when one presents an array of 'Lozi historians' as informants on the Caprivi, it is difficult to tell from their accounts how much is oral tradition, and how much is reproduced from the textbook histories taught in schools. Kruger observed the same point: '...Jallas' book was freely distributed as a setwork in the schools and one can never quite tell when hearing someone relate early history how much came from that treatise.'²⁰

The question remains. Did the Subiya exert any influence independent of the Lozi in the Caprivi, especially before the Lozi conquest? Evidence presented above that Mwanamwale was chief of the Subiya before the Lozi came to take him into bondage, is accepted in this regard. In fact, the Subiya Traditional Authority not only acknowledges that Mwanamwale was chief at Sesheke but names four other chiefs rarely mentioned in oral history before him, *Munitenge*²¹ Itenge, *Munitenge* Litundu-Lituu, *Munitenge* Ikuhane and *Munitenge* Mwale.²² The dynastic heritage of the Subiya has been largely dismissed²³ and is certainly not of great concern here. What is important is to reiterate a statement made by Pretorius in 1975 that the Masubiya has '...a recognized line of chiefs dating back two and half centuries',²⁴ The fact that the Lozi accept that Mwanamwale had been the rightful chief of the Subiya²⁵ supports the existence of an earlier autonomous status in the history of the Subiya. Flint himself states that when Mwanambinyi dispersed the Mbukushu at Katima Mulilo, the Subiya became recognized as an autonomous group.²⁶ The Masubiya, as Kruger has shown, always maintained that before the Makololo (under Sebetwane) came to the Zambezi regions, they were an independent chieftainship. This was broken down by the Kololo

¹⁹ Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa', 2003, 399.

²⁰ Kruger, C.E. 'History of Caprivi', 1982, Chapter 2, p. 6 (A.472, NAN).

²¹ Literally, Chief.

²² Main Organizing Committee [The], 'Report and Background Information on the Fourth Masubia Annual Cultural Festival held on 30 July 2005 at Munitenge Royal Headquarters (Bukalo Kuta), and prepared for the Munitenge Royal Establishment 1652, July 2005', pp. 22-27. Copy in the possession of the author. Mwanamwale literally translates as child of Mwale.

²³ Among others, see Fisch, Maritz, Flint, and Kruger.

²⁴ Pretorius, J.L., 'The Fwe of the Eastern Caprivi Strip', (MA, Univ. of Stellenbosch), 1975, p. 22. Pretorius is accused of relying on Masubiya informants, particularly a Subia schoolmaster at Kanono School.

²⁵ See Flint, *Op cit.*, p. 399.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

through conquest, and when the Kololo were overthrown by the Lozi, the latter simply took over and ruled as the Makololo had done.²⁷

Two issues emerge from the foregoing discussion. The first, that Lozi control over the Subiya intensified and became more effective only after the 'restoration' or second Lozi Empire and, secondly, that the Subiya autonomous status was linked to territorial rights. A discussion on how effective Lozi control over the Caprivi was before the Kololo invasion should take cognizance of three factors: the spatial distribution of the population at the time, the numerical strength of the population and the mobility and trans boundary nature of societies at the time. Taken together these factors indicate that Lozi domination of the Subiya of Sesheke (which is not in the Caprivi) does not necessarily imply domination of Subiyas wherever they lived, considering that communities lived in small and autonomous clans scattered over what is now different territories. While recognizing that the Lozi appointed representatives to supervise the collection of taxes, I am inclined to argue that communities were largely free to live according to their laws and customs and appoint their own chiefs. The work of the representatives, as Flint, quoting Mainga, has observed was mainly economic.²⁸ Cases of a serious political nature were referred back to the Lozi capital. It follows therefore that Lozi control over the Caprivi before the Kololo invasion was mainly by 'remote control', especially through occasional punishment parties sent for that purpose, as well as to plunder.

One such significant expedition as far as the Caprivi is concerned was undertaken by the sixth Lozi ruler, Ngombala (1725-1775).²⁹ Unlike Mwanambinyi and his son Mulia who ended their exploits at Sesheke where they captured the Subiya chief Mwanamwale and brought him and a section of the Subiya to Senanga (Kaonga near Senanga), it was Ngombala who extended Lozi influence further southwards to cover the present day Caprivi. According to Flint, Ngombala commanded an expedition 'to put down an apparent rebellion on the part of certain groups south of Bulozhi, including the Subia',³⁰ once again showing that the latter were constantly resisting Lozi rule. Maritz, following Jalla, records that Ngombala's regiments moved from Nakaywe via Sioma to Sesheke and Kazungula.³¹ During this campaign Ngombala plundered the Subiya, Toka and Leya on his way past the Victoria

²⁷ Kruger, in a contribution submitted to the Budack Commission.

²⁸ Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa', 2003, p. 400.

²⁹ Maritz, after Pretorius (1975, p. 26).

³⁰ Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa', 2003, p. 399.

³¹ Maritz, 1996, p. 178.

Falls to Hwange³² in present day Zimbabwe.³³ From Hwange Ngombala is reported to have descended along the Chobe river past Ngoma as far as the Mbunda in present day Angola, subduing all the groups living along the river. This would seem to be the first recorded passage of any Lozi royal along this route, and therefore the first evidence of Lozi 'control' over the Caprivi. As stated earlier this control, apart from the representatives or Lindumeleti, was largely in the form of raids aimed at the plunder of resources and effect punitive measures. Ngombala appointed deputies or representatives to collect taxes and oversee the supply of labour and generally to guard the fords at Linyanti,³⁴ later Mwanangombe at Linyanti (now Sangwali), and on the Mashi river at Sekau, Masiala and Mwambwa Seluka.³⁵

Flint notes that very little is known or preserved (in his words 'recorded') of Lozi-Caprivi interaction in the period between Ngombala and the arrival of the Makololo in the late 1820s/early 1830s.³⁶ On the authority of Jalla,³⁷ he notes that none of the four wars that were fought for the purpose of plunder and the subordination of surrounding peoples during the reign of King Mulambwa (1780-1830) involved the Caprivi.³⁸ One assumption Flint makes is that the people of Caprivi continued to pay tribute and labour to the Lozi. However, as Flint himself emphasizes, this is purely an assumption.³⁹ A different explanation could be that Lozi control over the Caprivi and the Subiya during this period (well over half a century) was at its weakest. This allowed the penetration and conquest of Bulobi by the Makololo from the south, following a route through the Caprivi assisted by Chief Liswani of the Subiya.

It was sometime during this period that a Subiya kingdom known as Itenge became consolidated. Itenge was founded by *Munitenge* Nsundano Shanjo, who took over from his brother Mafwira (now Mafwila) Shanjo as chief of the Subiya. *Munitenge* Nsundano Shanjo

³² Maritz (p. 178) believes that this is derived from the name of another representative of Ngombala, namely Wange/Hwange.

³³ According to Lozi sources of Flint (p. 399), Ngombala remained at Victoria Falls while a contingent of his warriors crossed the river to plunder deeper into the present day Hwange region of western Zimbabwe.

³⁴ While not refuting this assertion (which is itself not supported by other evidence), I am reluctant to support the implication that this is the origin of the name and will later show that it was the Makololo who gave the place the name Linyanti (place where I will suffer and die), later to be known as Linyanti.

³⁵ See M. Mainga, *Bulobi under the Luyana Kings*, pp. 59-60.

³⁶ Flint, 2003, p. 400.

³⁷ A. Jalla, 'History: Traditions and Legends', 1909, p. 14.

³⁸ Flint, *op cit*.

³⁹ *Ibid*.

as reportedly a contemporary⁴⁰ of Mulambwa, a Lozi ruler referred to above. According to Shamukuni, it was during the rule of warrior⁴¹ chief Nsundano that the Basubiya became identified as an independent tribe.⁴² The boundaries of Itenge were as follows (see map 2): Sakapani south of Goha as the most southern point, Nunga to the southeast, Chungwe Namutitima (Victoria Falls) to the east, along the Zambezi upstream as far north as Sioma, and to the west downstream along the Kwando through Kaunga and Singalamwe, past Savute (Savuti) and down to Sakapani.⁴³ With the intrusion of the Lozi into his territory, *Munitenge* Nsundano sought to expand his territory eastwards. He reportedly entered into an alliance with a Mutoka chief, by the name of Sikute, against Makuni who lived east of Chungwe Namutitima (Victoria Falls), the intention being to conquer the territory of the Makuni. It was during the expedition against Makuni that *Munitenge* Nsundano met his fate in battle.⁴⁴ Nsundano was succeeded by his nephew Liswani I.

As stated earlier, Maria Fisch is one critic of the claim that Itenge ever existed, her argument being that it was not in the Caprivi but denoted an area possibly raided by Nsundano in the land of the Toka-Leya. A second argument, made by the Mafwe, is that at no point in history did the Masubiya subjugate them. According to this reasoning, Mafwe never

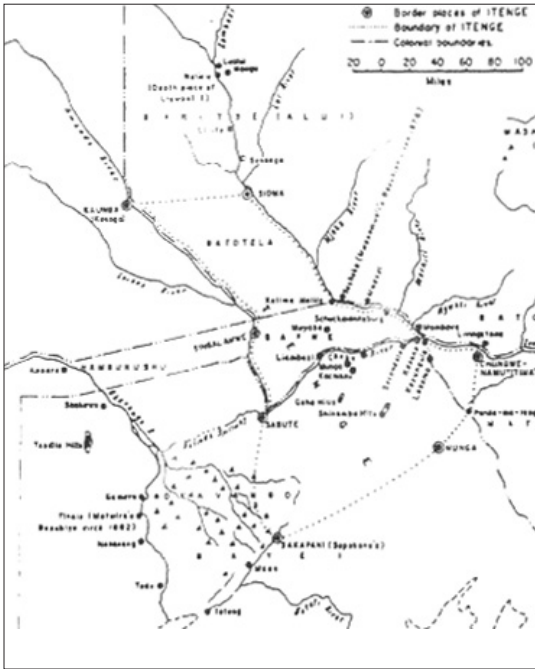
⁴⁰ Maritz, after Shamukuni, 'The Basubiya', p. 164.

⁴¹ Because of his bravery, Nsundano became known as Liberenge (Libelenge or Lipelenge) Cisunda Manyika, *wakasundankanda nobuta*. The name Liberenge is derived from the Subiya verb 'bera' meaning to peel. 'kuSunda' means to push; 'Manyika or Inkanda' means countries in Subiya. 'Buta' means an arrow; So in praising Nsundano, a Subiya elder or praise singer would say 'Nsundano, Liberenge, cisunda manyika, wa ka sunda nkanda no buta.' This translates as 'Nsundano, the Peeler, and the Pusher of countries, who pushed away countries with (by means of) an arrow.' He was so named because he defined and defended Itenge. He would die while on one of his war expeditions. See Likando, E., 1989, 'The Caprivi Strip: A Historical Perspective', Lusaka: UNIN (NAN), p. 30; Also Shamukuni, D.M., 'The Basubiya', *Botswana Notes and Records*, vol. 4, 1972, pp. 161-183, p. 163.

⁴² *Ibid.* 163.

⁴³ Maritz, 1996, p.182.

⁴⁴ Main Organizing Committee, The 'Masubia Annual Cultural Festival, 2005', p. 18, (copy in my possession). According to Shamukuni (p.165), Munitenge Nsundano was killed by the baLeya after his warriors had refused to carry out his orders. It is said that he had been away for over a year fighting the baLeya. His warriors became tired and homesick and asked the Munitenge to return home but he told them that he had decided to fight longer than they had fought already. After chasing the baLeya for days, the warriors violated Liberenge's orders (Nsundano) and returned to Luchindo (his royal headquarters in the Caprivi). When Liberenge saw that his warriors were going home against his orders, he broke the shaft of his spear in rage, sat on his shield and uttered the following words: *Mubelyowa ciinenkuba, bahikaana benu nibakamisuwe*, meaning, 'Be ye cowardly as doves, let thy slaves subdue thee. He was found there by the baLeya warriors who killed him. When some of the Basubiya returned to where they had left him, they found that he had already been killed. It is said that the baLeya cut off his head, but his mouth kept on opening and shutting itself and his eyes winking ,as though he was still alive, for many days.



Map 2: The extent of Itenge, adapted from Fosse (1996), after Shamukuni (1972)

paid tribute to Subiya chiefs. Fisch does not provide evidence to support her assertion that Itenge was not in the Caprivi. The fact that she acknowledges Nsundano and his exploits and claims that he targeted the Toka-Leya is itself telling. As for taxes, while we accept that Sebetwane of the Makololo subdued the Lozi, whether the latter paid tribute to the Kololo has never been confirmed as no evidence of this has yet been found in the available historical sources. This, however, does not change the fact that the Lozi were subject to Makololo. Similarly, while the Subiya claim that Itenge existed, they emphasize that other groups lived there at peace with them. Maritz dismisses the existence of Itenge

on the basis that there is no record to show that the Lozi ceded the Caprivi to Nsundano, that Nsundano's conquests are not recorded, and that it was the Lozi and not the Subiya who attacked Sebetwane when he crossed the Chobe in the mid-1820s or early 1830s.

While not giving any weight to the above points by discussing them, it may be pertinent to make an observation, namely that the nature of pre-colonial societies was not defined by 'land' and 'territory' as much as by allegiances among specific groups of people. As Seleti has argued, 'land occupied by pre-colonial governing structures could expand and contract at will due to relatively low population densities and people could migrate according to the need and availability of resources'.⁴⁵ Even Lewanika, Paramount Chief of the Lozi Kingdom, recognized the difficulty in defining 'territoriality' during pre-colonial times as seen from the following quote, 'When Major Goold-Adams questioned King Lewanika asking him to describe the boundary of his kingdom, he replied 'I do not know what you mean by kingdom, but I will tell you where my people live...''⁴⁶ Therefore in the case of Itenge too much

⁴⁵ Seleti Y. 'Chapter 1 – State Formation in Nineteenth century SA.' Turning Points Book 3: <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/chronology/turningpoints/bk3/chapter1.htm>.

⁴⁶ SEC22 (NAZ)

emphasis is put on 'land' and 'territoriality' in interpreting its existence. Rather the fact that it existed and continues to exist in the present should not be ignored. It represented resistance and defiance to Lozi rule, a refusal to be Lozi and to identify with Lozi expressions and notions of citizenship.

The next section will describe the Subiya attack on Lozi dominion.

Subiya-Makololo Interaction

Of the groups that traversed pre-colonial Caprivi, the Makololo of Sebetwane is perhaps the best described, after the Lozi. Their migration and settlement in the Caprivi and Bulobi have been the subjects of many studies.⁴⁷ Briefly, Sebetwane was a Difagane (Mfecane) escapee who belligerently plundered as he moved northwards. After taking part in an attack on the Tlhaping great-place, Dithakong,⁴⁸ he plundered numerous Tswana tribes in the Western Transvaal and Botswana and clashed with his arch-enemy, Mzilikazi of the Matebele,⁴⁹ finally arriving at the Chobe River. According to the Yeyi sources of David Sasa,⁵⁰ Sebetwane was helped to cross the river by *Induna* (headman) Kuratau (a Mueyeyi) at the Matwatwa crossing point in the Lyashulu area.⁵¹ Sebetwane then brutally murdered Kuratau to prevent him giving further assistance to others⁵² who might come that way, possibly the Matebele or the Batawana. Kuratau thus became Sebetwane's first victim in a pre-colonial Caprivi where societal relations and friendships were not permanent but rather defined by survival, even if this meant assassinating one's friends to fend off one's rivals.

⁴⁷ See, for example, E. W. Smith, 'Sebetwane and the Makololo', *African Studies*, Vol. 15, 1956, p. 49; D.F. Ellenberger and J. C. Macgregor, *History of the Basuto*, London: Caxton, 1912 (reprinted New York: Negro University Press, 1969), 305; V. Ellenberger (1939); D. L., Livingstone, *Missionary travels and researches in South Africa*, London: John Murray, 1857; I. Schapera, *Livingstone's private journals, 1851-1853*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1960, pp. 16-28; M. Mainga, *Bulobi under the Luyana kings*, London: Longman, 1973: 65-104.

⁴⁸ Moffat, 1842:355

⁴⁹ Smith, 'Sebetwane and the Makololo'; Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*.

⁵⁰ A former student in the History Department at the University of Namibia, Sasa did research in Botswana and Namibia (Caprivi) focusing on the revival of the Mayeyi identity in both countries. At the time of his passing away, he was a Candidate for a Master's of Arts Degree in History, on the same topic, at UNAM. The whereabouts of Sasa's fieldwork, comprised mainly of oral interviews in Botswana and Namibia, is not known. He was a dedicated scholar. May his soul rest in peace.

⁵¹ Sasa, D., 'The Mayeyi Chieftainship', paper presented at the 'Public History: Forgotten History' Conference hosted by the History Department of the University of Namibia, 2000, p. 10.

⁵² *Ibid.*

Sebetwane moved eastward along the Chobe until he reached the confluence between the Zambezi and Chobe Rivers where he met Liswani, chief of the Masubiya at the time.⁵³ The significance of the meeting between Sebetwane and Liswani is often underplayed and presented as one in which the latter did not have a say.⁵⁴ For the Masubiya this was the start of the disintegration of their kingdom of Itenge. *Munitenge* Liswani agreed to assist Sebetwane first to cross to Impalila Island over the Chobe and then from the upper part of the Island over the Zambezi to Mambova⁵⁵ on two conditions, firstly that he assist in attacking the Leya to revenge the death of Nsundano⁵⁶ and, secondly, that he promise to give them part of the war booty he would capture from the Toka-Leya and other groups that he would conquer.⁵⁷ While the Lozi reportedly lost in battle to Sebetwane's general Mbololo on an open plain a few kilometers to the north of Mazumani (presently Linyanti)⁵⁸, it appears that the Lozi were unaware of Sebetwane's plans to attack them from the east. One explanation would be that their relations with the Subiya were at such a low point the latter would not warn them of the threat. The other could be that Lozi control over the Subiya was weak, or even non-existent during this period. By helping Sebetwane to cross the rivers on his way to attack the Lozi, the Subiya showed defiance thereby indicating where their allegiance lay at the time. Sebetwane subdued the groups he came in contact with north of the Zambezi, including the Lozi, and became supreme chief of all the tribes in that vast region. Sebetwane made his headquarters at Naliele in the upper Zambezi, declaring the Zambezi would henceforth be his line of defence. He posted his villages at strategic points along the river's bank.

Even though Sebetwane became very friendly with the Subiya of Liswani, this friendship did not last for long. One version maintains that *Munitenge* Liswani was upset by a favour shown to *Induna* Soha Mwanamwale, a Musubiya, in the form of a cow sent to him probably as a token of preference over Liswani.⁵⁹ Liswani then appealed to the Matabele for help. This led to an ill-fated attack on Sebetwane by the Matabele and their allies, the Masubiya. Even though Liswani fled to his former place at Kazungula, Sebetwane invited him to Naliele on

⁵³ Other sources mention that Sebetwane met Nsundano.

⁵⁴ See for example Trollope, 'Report on the Administration of the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel', 1940, p. 12.

⁵⁵ Other sources state that Sebetwane crossed the Zambezi at Kazungula with the help of the Toka of Musokotwane. See Maritz, 1996, p. 179.

⁵⁶ Most sources just mention that Sebetwane got involved in a tribal dispute at the request of the Subiya. See Maritz, 'The Subia and Fwe', 1996, p. 179.

⁵⁷ Likando, 'History of the Caprivi Strip', 1989, p. 33.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p. 32. On the strength of M. Mainga, *Bulozi Under the Luyana Kings*, 1973, p. 66; A. Schulz & A. Hammer, *The New Africa: A journey up the Chobe and Down the Okavango Rivers: A Record of Exploration and Sport*. London: William Heineman.

⁵⁹ Could be the same Mwanamwale taken to Kaonga, near Sioma.

what the former thought to be a friendly visit thinking that all was forgiven, but there he was put to death.⁶⁰ The other version states that Sebetwane, having defeated other tribes in the area, returned and attacked the Subiya at Nyungu on the Chobe. The Subiya, surprised in their sleep, fled while their chief, Liswani (son of Nsundano's sister), went to find refuge with Mzilikazi, chief of the Matebele. It is said that the Matebele offered Liswani their assistance and returned with him to Nyungu, but found that Sebetwane had gone back to Barotseland.⁶¹ Sebetwane then treacherously invited Liswani to visit him, promising peace and to make good on his promise to share the war booty. Liswani accepted the invitation against the advice of his people; he was murdered in Barotseland on Sebetwane's orders.

The two versions agree that Liswani was killed by Sebetwane in Barotseland at Naliele on the Zambezi River. It is evident that Liswani was unhappy with the fact that Sebetwane had laid claim to the territory that belonged to his people. The request for Sebetwane to intervene in local disputes and to attack the Lozi was intended by the Masubiya to consolidate their position and ensure stability in their territory. Nevertheless, they found themselves betrayed by Sebetwane. A slight difference can be observed. In the second version no attack by a joint Matebele/Subiya force is reported. However, the evidence shows that such an attack did take place.⁶² In a pre-colonial Caprivi where everything was uncertain, betrayal was part of the art of survival. That was what happened to a group of Matebele warriors on a mission to attack Sebetwane. A Musubiya named Simalumba agreed to help them cross to the mainland, but deposited them on an island instead, where they died of starvation or were finished off by the Makololo. The island became known as 'Sioli sa Matebele' or the Island of the Matebele (also Sikachila). It is not known whether this is the same group invited by Liswani to assist his attack on Sebetwane.

Liswani's death, which perhaps took place shortly before 1838,⁶³ cleared the way for Sebetwane to set up his headquarters at Linyanti in the Caprivi,⁶⁴ possibly because the

⁶⁰ Kruger, 1984: p. 6.

⁶¹ Ernest Likando (1989, p. 34) believes that the Kololo attacked the Subiya after the Matebele had left in a battle known in Subiya legend as the 'Battle of Nabulankoli', after the manner in which it was fought, using mainly spears made out of sticks from wood. He gives the approximate year in which this supposedly took place as 1838 (p. 173).

⁶² Trollope, 1940, p. 13.

⁶³ Sebetwane is believed to have defeated and conquered the Lozi around 1838. Since Liswani assisted him to cross the Zambezi on his way to attack the Lozi, one can conclude that he killed him shortly before 1838.

⁶⁴ According to David Sasa (2000:10), Sebetwane named Linyanti (now Linyanti) in the Sangwali area as his headquarters in 1850, its name meaning 'a place where I will stay and suffer'. He was suffering from a wound on his thigh that had been inflicted in war and was apparently coughing badly.

Matebele's allies, the Masubiya, were now completely subdued. The empire of the Kololo was short-lived. Sebetwane died on 7 July 1851 shortly after he met David Livingstone and lies buried on an island named Sheshe near Sangwali village in the Caprivi.⁶⁵ This was contrary to Flint's claim that Sebetwane's body was returned to Naliele, his capital in Barotseland after his death.⁶⁶ According to his wish Sebetwane was succeeded by his daughter Mmamochisane, who abdicated and handed over the chieftainship to Sekeletu, a son (possibly 'stepson') of Sebetwane. Sekeletu did not possess Sebetwane's leadership qualities, and consequently resistance within the Makololo as well as within subordinate groups began to mount, thus weakening the kingdom. He was reported to have been indecisive and extremely mistrustful, appointing only Kololo in positions of authority and ordering the killing of all rivals.⁶⁷ Because of competing claims to the throne, particularly from his uncle Mamili, Sekeletu lived a secluded life and, according to Pretorius, 'he took almost no part in affairs of state.'⁶⁸ Commenting on the decay of Makololo prestige, previously feared in the land, A.J. Wills remarked, 'The rapid descent from the pinnacle of warrior statesmanship achieved by Sebetwane can perhaps be ascribed to a lack of common tradition among the Kololo, a heterogeneous group born in disintegration and held together only by the personality of a great leader.'⁶⁹

In 1863 Sekeletu died of leprosy,⁷⁰ for which David Livingstone had treated him, leaving an infant son. A headman, Mbololo, was appointed to act as regent. Mbololo shifted the Makololo capital from Linyanti in the Caprivi to (old) Sesheke or Mwandu an old Subiya settlement in present day Zambia. The Kololo remained deeply divided, and Mbololo himself became an unpopular leader.

Subiya Defiance after the Lozi Restoration

It was during the reign of Mbololo that the Lozi called on Sepopa to return from Lukwakwa (the meeting point of refugees outside the kingdom) to lead an invading force southwards. Sepopa, a Lozi prince who lived for a while at the royal headquarters of Sebetwane and Sekeletu at Linyanti. He led a revolution, joined by the Masubiya and Toka, against the

⁶⁵ Kruger, 1984, Chapter 2, p. 3.

⁶⁶ See footnote 48 of Lawrence Flint's work: 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa', 2003, p. 403.

⁶⁷ Maritz, 1996, p. 179.

⁶⁸ Pretorius, 1975, p. 29.

⁶⁹ A.J., Willis, *An Introduction to the History of Central Africa*, London: Oxford University Press, p. 63.

⁷⁰ He is buried at Malengalenga, from where he ruled.

Kololo in 1864 with Njekwa, his subsequent *Ngambela* (prime minister), in the forefront. Njekwa had all the men exterminated,⁷¹ while children and women were distributed among Lozi rulers. Lozi hegemony over the Masubiya and Toka was by this time weak. In fact the two groups indicated that they had become autonomous with the decline in Makololo authority.⁷² However, Sepopa then descended on the Subiya and Toka in order to subjugate them. He began with the Toka whom he reduced to submission before embarking on a campaign to subdue the Subiya. It was during this time (around 1876) that an exodus of Masubiya people from the Caprivi led by Chief Nkonkwena took place. They settled at Rakops near the Makgadikgadi Pan on the Botletle River as guests of Chief Khama III of the Ngwato, for this was his area. After the death of Nkonkwena, the group continued to live at Rakops, now under Chika Liswani, until the scarcity of food and water forced them to migrate to Mababe where they lived until 1902 when the Mababe Pan began to dry up.

This Masubiya community then split again, one group returned to the Chobe and settled at Munga near what is now called Kachikau (otherwise known to the Masubiya as Kachekabwe)⁷³, while a splinter group under Chief Nkonkwena's son, Mafwira (Mafwila), broke away with a number of followers and settled at Tlhale near Gomare in Ngamiland in the area of Moremi, chief of the Batawana. A small section remained on the Mababe where old Liswani's village could easily be distinguished in the past by the castor oil plants that growing there. The group that remained behind in the Caprivi during the 1876 migration to Botswana was ruled by chieftainess Ntolwa Malyansanzwe from Isuswa west of Ngoma.

After Ntolwa's death a leadership vacuum opened up for the Masubiya in Caprivi. The German administration appointed a commoner, Chikamatondo, as regent to Liswaninyana, Ntolwa's young nephew and heir in 1909 until Liswaninyana took over. The Masubiya chieftainship in Caprivi reverted back to the Liswani dynasty at that time. Thus instead of submitting to the Lozi under Sepopa, Chief Nkonkwena of the Masubiya and his people showed defiance by simply 'moving away'. This could be interpreted today as 'fleeing', but at that time was certainly an act of survival. Commenting on this migration and the difficulties that ensued for Sepopa as a result, Holub noted, 'As a consequence of Sepopo's (Sepopa or more correctly Sipopa) oppression, many of the natives have withdrawn from the kingdom, generally going south, and the difficulty of collecting tribute anywhere has greatly increased.'⁷⁴ According to Flint this added to Sepopa's dependence on trade with

⁷¹ E. Holub, *Seven Years in South Africa*, London: Sampson, Marston, Searle and Remington, 1881, vol. 2, p. 143.

⁷² Maritz, 1996, pp. 179-180.

⁷³ Referring to a process of sharpening spears on a particular stone before going to war.

⁷⁴ Holub, p. 146.

Europeans and the Afro-Portuguese Mambari,⁷⁵ who, it should be added, traded mainly in slaves. Sepopa was a cruel autocrat. He was driven into exile by a force led by his prime minister, Mwanawina II who, according to Flint, obtained much of his support from the Subiya. Mwanawina was installed as the Lozi king between August and November 1876.⁷⁶ Both Mwanawina and Sepopa's mothers were Subiyas.

The 1876 Subiya migration from the Caprivi failed to diminish their zeal to influence events in Barotseland. Mwanawina II⁷⁷ was overthrown shortly afterwards. He was replaced by Lubosi (who assumed the name Lewanika⁷⁸) in 1878. Lewanika was himself overthrown in 1884 and forced to flee to the west. He regained his throne a year later in what is described as the 'longest and hardest fought battle in the history of Barotseland'⁷⁹ and in which Lewanika sought the aid of Mbukushu and Mambari mercenaries.⁸⁰ The Subiya played a pivotal role in the 1884 rebellion that overthrew Lewanika. This was organized by Mataa, an ambitious Lozi commoner who became *Ngambela* (prime minister) to the new chief Akufuna. The seat of power was now situated at Sesheke, a Subiya area.

The discussion has hitherto focused on the conflicts that characterized relations between the Masubiya and the Lozi. This supports my assertion that 'citizenship and subjectivity' has an element of resistance in state formation and demonstrates that the Subiyas were not 'willing' Lozis in the state of Barotseland as conventional historiography would have it. They constantly sought ways to free themselves from Lozi bondage. However it should be noted that the Subiya and the Lozi had a mutually reinforcing interrelationship. The fact that some Lozi kings such as Sepopa and Lewanika had Subiya mothers elevated the position of Sesheke to be one of enormous importance and significance to the Lozi, and they in turn were accepted as being 'home' among the Masubiya. As a result, Masubiya enjoyed influential positions in the Lozi state, some being appointed as headmen. Subiya legend has it that their name 'Subiya' was given to them by the Aluyi (Lozi) apparently because of the active part they played in the government of the Aluyi and Makololo and that there was a saying: 'Subiya nokusubalala umulonga', meaning the Subiya are trying to push the kingdom.⁸¹

⁷⁵ Flint, 2003, pp. 408.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 408-409.

⁷⁷ According to Mainga (*Bulozi under Luyana Kings*, p. 118), Mwanawina II escaped first to the Mashi, then to Sesheke, and finally to the Batoka highlands.

⁷⁸ Meaning 'uniter', see Flint.

⁷⁹ See Jalla, 'History: Traditions and Legends', p. 54.

⁸⁰ Flint, p. 410, after Jalla, *Ibid.* p. 55.

⁸¹ See Pretorius, J, 'The Fwe of Eastern Caprivi Zipfel: A study of their historical and geographical background, tribal structure and legal system, with reference to the Fwe family law and succession.' (MA, University of Stellenbosch), 1975, p. 22.

Other Groups in Pre-colonial Caprivi

The impression should not be created that there was only one group, the Masubiya, occupying Caprivi in pre-colonial times. The early history of the Masubiya groups them with Mayeyi and Hambukushu (Bantu botatwe⁸²) at Goha Hills in Botswana before they migrated into the Caprivi. Here the Mayeyi (whom they called Bezanza – those who are coming), were ruled by the following Mashikati (chiefs or leaders), Hankuze, Matsharatshara, Qunku and his brother Qunkunyane.⁸³ The Mbukushu lived under their chiefs, Mashambo, Mbungo, Dibebe I, and Dimbo I, who was known to the Tawana as Andara,⁸⁴ and of course the Barakwena (San).⁸⁵ Another group that features prominently in early literature on the Caprivi is the Matotela, the most of whom lived in today's Zambia under their leaders Mayuwa, Mokwe, and Malala who was resident on the upper Njoko river.⁸⁶ The Matotela in the Caprivi were an offshoot from the main body. They resided east of Sibbinda, which included the area within a radius of 15 miles of Katima Mulilo.⁸⁷

With the advent of German administration in the Caprivi, these groups collectively assumed the identity Bafwe (Bayeyi) and later became known simply as Mafwe. These groups are not included in the above discussion mainly because, as has been repeatedly reported by several writers,⁸⁸ 'they were not as deeply involved in the bloody feuds of the two decades ... as the politically-minded and ambitious Subiya.'⁸⁹ One reason might be that it was because they inhabited areas far removed from the main area of activity, that is, the Zambezi River, with principal trade routes at the time pointing to the east through Impalila, Kazungula and Pandamatenga. Apart from inhabiting remote areas away from the Zambezi, Kruger adds that the Mafwe at this time 'were in any event a relatively small and humble tribal group of no contention in the way of things in the period with which we are dealing.'⁹⁰ More research into the pre-colonial history of the Caprivi could yet paint a different picture. An informal

⁸² Literally three people; referring to the three groups.

⁸³ Sasa, David, 'The Mayeyi Chieftainship', a paper presented at the 'Public History: Forgotten History' Conference hosted by the History Department at the University of Namibia in Windhoek, 2000, p. 2.

⁸⁴ G.E., Nettelton, 'History of the Ngamiland Tribes up to 1926', *Bantu Studies* Nr. 8, 1934.

⁸⁵ Known locally as Makwengo, which has a derogatory tone.

⁸⁶ NAZ, KDE 2417.

⁸⁷ C.E. Kruger, 'The make-up (tribal origin) of the inhabitants of the Mafwe Tribal Area, with special reference to the Matotela', Report dated 13 May 1976, p. 1 (NAN A. 871, Box 2, File 2).

⁸⁸ See Pretorius, 'The Fwe of Eastern Caprivi', 1975, p. 29; J. Fosse, 1996, 'Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Eastern Caprivi', (MA Thesis, University of Oslo, NAN), 1996, p. 104.

⁸⁹ Pretorius, 'The Fwe of Eastern Caprivi'.

⁹⁰ Kruger, *Ibid.* op cit., Chapter 2: p. 8.

census conducted in 1976 showed that the make-up or composition of the Mafwe tribal area was as follows:

Ethnic Group	Number of villages out of 298	% (±)
Matotela	95	30
Mayeyi	75	25
Mafwe	61	20
Mbukushu	30	10
Lozi	14	4.7
Subiya	13	4.6

Table 3: *Informal census showing composition of the Mafwe tribal area in 1976*⁹¹

Comparatively little is known about the origin and history of the Mafwe. According to Pretorius, 'they are historically also the least known tribe'⁹² in the Caprivi. Pretorius observes that the first reference to the Fwe can be found in Streitwolf's report on the Eastern Caprivi which appeared in the *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* in 1910. He states that 'even the oldest members of the tribe can recall no tradition of tribal chiefs prior to Simataa Kabende, who was appointed as representative at Linyanti by the Lozi in the 1860s.' John Leif Fosse (1996: 104) contends that the first mention of the Mafwe in written sources appears to be in A. Jalla's 'Lozi History' extracted from an undated manuscript, which he estimated to be from around the turn of the nineteenth century.⁹³

There is no mention of the Mafwe in the entire literature covering the Makololo period, except for the name Mamili which is encountered several times.⁹⁴ This Mamili, whose surname was 'Ncumbe' (according to Pretorius⁹⁵) or Bogatsu (according to Schapera⁹⁶), was a

⁹¹ Extracted from C.E. Kruger, 'The make-up (tribal origin) of the inhabitants of the Mafwe tribal area, with special reference to the Matotela, 13/05/1976 (NAN: A. 871, Box 2, File 2).

⁹² *Ibid.* p. 24.

⁹³ A.D. Jalla's book, *History: Traditions and Legends of the Barotse Nation* (Sefula) appeared in 1939.

⁹⁴ See for example, F. Westbeeck, *Trade and Travel in Early Barotseland*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1963, p. 63; D. Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, London: John Murray, 1857, p.513; I. Schapera, *Livingstone's private journals, 1851-1853*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1960, p. 236; M. Mainga, *Bulozi under the Luyana kings*, London: Longman, 1973: pp. 95-96.

⁹⁵ Pretorius, 'The Fwe of Eastern Caprivi', 1975, p. 30.

⁹⁶ Schapera, *Livingstone's private journals, 1851-1853*, p. 326.

Kololo and an uncle to Sekeletu, and should not be confused⁹⁷ with the Lozi Mamili who came to the forefront in Linyanti with the restoration of the Lozi kingdom in 1865.

At the close of Makololo rule, Livingstone described Mamili Ncumbe (or Bogatsu) as the 'most influential in the tribe.' He tried to take over the reins of power and have his son succeed Sekeletu, but faced resistance from the Makololo under Mbololo, the Lozi and other groups.⁹⁸ On the accession of Mbololo to the throne, Mamili Ncumbe fled south with his followers to seek refuge from the chief of the Batawana, Letsholathebe. Instead of receiving protection, Mamili Ncumbe and male members of his group were reportedly killed by the Tawana on the instruction of Letsholathebe.⁹⁹

The overthrow of the Makololo consolidated Lozi control over the Caprivi who now appointed regional representatives in positions previously held by Makololo. The southern boundary of the Caprivi needed careful vigilance to prevent attacks from the Matebele and the possible return of the Makololo. At Impalila Island in the east, the Lozi placed Makumba in control. Subsequent appointments were: Kabuku at Kasenu, Kabulabula at Ibembe (now called Kabulabula), and Mutwamezi near Ngoma. To the West the following representatives were put in charge: Imataa or Simataa Kabende (who took over from Mwanangombe, and Linyanti before him) at Linyanti, Mwanota, Sekau, Masiala and Mwambwa Seluka who was deputized by Mayuni on the Mashi (Kwando) River.

The Lozi divided the Caprivi into four zones for administrative purposes. The Masubiya fell under the direct control of the Lozi sub-chief at Mwandi (old Sesheke) who was accountable to the Paramount Chief. Perhaps it was because of constant political unrest with repeated attempts to become independent that there was a need to tightly control affairs in the Masubiya area, as opposed to the Mafwe who had some degree of semi-autonomous status under Lozi rule. The Mafwe were not much affected by the turbulence of the time as they lived far from the principal district centres of the southeastern province of Senanga, Sesheke and the island of Impalira (Impalila) or Makumba. Mwanota was the leader of the Matotela on both sides of the Zambezi. Even though he resided in what is today Zambia,¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ See Westbeech. *Op cit.*, p. 63. Flint believes the Lozi Mamili, Simataa Kabende was an uncle to Sekeletu. No evidence could be found to substantiate this assertion. Instead it was the Kololo Mamili (Ncumbe or Bogatsu) who was an uncle to Sekeletu.

⁹⁸ D. Livingstone, 1857:514.

⁹⁹ See D.F. Ellenberger and J. C., Macgregor, *History of the Basuto*, London: Caxton, 1912 (reprinted New York: Negro University Press, 1969), 177; Holub, *Seven years in South Africa*, p.144; and Schapera, *Livingstone's private journals*, 1851-1853, p.236.

¹⁰⁰ Mwanota's headquarters were situated north west of Katima Mulilo, at Silolo. He was called Monawuta (Mwanota) or son of the bow because he hunted with a bow and arrow while the Yeyi and Few used only a spear (Fisch, Maria, *The Caprivi Strip during the German Colonial Period 1890 to 1914* [with a chapter on the boundary dispute up to the present], Windhoek: Out of Af-

his area of influence in the Caprivi extended from Katima Mulilo to Sibbinda in the west. Mwambwa Seluka controlled the area from Sibbinda to Lizauli through Mayuni, whose mother was a Yeyi. His control stretched up to the area east of the Sangwali swamps.¹⁰¹

Simataa Mamili is the best known of the Lozi *Indunas* (headmen) of the time, probably because he inherited the name 'Mamili' from the famous Kololo general. He chose to live not very far from Linyanti of the Makololo and, of the three Lozi *Indunas* responsible for the western side, he was the only one resident in the Caprivi. He controlled the area in the west, which was inhabited largely by Masubiya and Yeyi people with a few Mafwe scattered among them.¹⁰² Such was the state of things when the Germans arrived in the Caprivi in 1909 to set up administrative control in the area. Streitwolf failed to convince Liswani of the Masubiya at Mababe (Botswana) to return to the Caprivi. As the only surviving member of the Liswani family in Caprivi was Liswaninyana who was still a boy, Chikamatondo (a commoner) was installed as regent. Streitwolf tried to persuade Mwanota and Seluka to relocate to the Caprivi and assist him to administer their people; both declined the offer. He then gave their subordinates the choice either to follow their leaders or remain under *Induna* Mamili, who was elevated to the position of chief over all non-Subiya speaking inhabitants of the Caprivi. Even though composed of different ethnic groups such as Mbukushu, Totela, Yeyi, San and Fwe, this group would henceforth (1909) be known as Bafwe (Bayeyi). This marked the beginning of the Mafwe Chieftainship as it is known today. In 1864 Imataa Kabende¹⁰³ was posted as the Lozi representative at Linyanti, and in 1909 the Germans confirmed him

rica, 1999, p. 55).

¹⁰¹ Fisch, p. 56.

¹⁰² Fisch (p. 57) believes Simataa Mamili's control extended from Ngoma in the east to Lizauli in the west, and in the north 'nearly' up to the Caprivi highway of today. This claim is not supported by any other source nor does Fisch substantiate it.

¹⁰³ The only existing claim to show the dynastic history of Simataa Kabende is a letter to *The Windhoek Advertiser* of 31 May 1996, in which the writer, M. Kozo of Windhoek, states that the Mafwe chieftainship dates back to 1760 when the son of Kabainda Muyongo, Imataa Kabende (corruption of Kabainda), was installed as chief of the Linyanti district because he was first cousin to King Lewanika of the Lozi. While the relationship of Imataa Kabende to the Lozi royals is still to be investigated, the reign of King Lewanika did not take place in the 1700s, as the writer would have it. He was installed in 1878, deposed and reinstated in 1884. The arrival of Simataa Kabende and his assumption of the title Mamili is well documented elsewhere even in this book and therefore does not need repeating here. At the very least, to suggest that Simataa Kabende Mamili was chief in 1760 is pure ignorance of the historical evidence on the part of the writer. Among the many historical 'lies' in this letter the writer tells readers is that Chancellor Von Caprivi of Germany, after whom the territory is named, visited Linyanti. There is no evidence that the Chancellor visited Africa at all during his short reign.

as chief until his death in about 1916. The Mayeyi and BaMashi or Mayuni have since reclaimed their individual identities by breaking away from the Mamili Chieftainship.¹⁰⁴

Summary

This chapter examined the contest for the control of the Caprivi during the pre-colonial period. Essentially it was argued that there were pre-colonial political and social formations in the Caprivi, which transcended Lozi and Kololo conquests and domination. Chief among these was the Subiya kingdom of Itege, the subject of often dismissive discussions in the current historiography. It was concluded that the existence of Itege should not be interpreted only in terms of 'land' and 'territoriality' as relationships in pre-colonial societies were defined more in terms of allegiances than the space of habitation, which expanded or contracted at will.

The advent of Lozi and Kololo domination brought conquest and servitude to the people of the Caprivi to the extent that the historiography (especially that of the colonial period) depicts the inhabitants as having no 'real' background, traditions and customs. The belief that the traditions the inhabitants of Caprivi practice are those that were bequeathed to them by their Lozi and Kololo overlords, prevails.

On a cultural level the contest for Caprivi identities involved the loss of cultural practices and values, this gap being largely filled with negative depictions of such traditions. I have shown, however, that resistance was an integral part of the process of state formation (citizenship and subjectivity) in the pre-colonial Caprivi, with the Subiya in particular clashing with the interests of their masters and forming alliances to consolidate their quest for autonomy. It was not only the locals who strove to wrest the control of the Caprivi away from one enemy or another during this period. Sebetwane of the Makololo and his erstwhile arch enemy Mzilikazi of the Matebele 'played out' their enmity in the Caprivi, as did the Makololo against the Lozi, and the Lozi against the Batawana. In brief, state formation and social relations in the pre-colonial Caprivi was characterized by conquest and displacement, betrayal and rivalry.

¹⁰⁴ For a fuller discussion and description of the re-assertion of Yeyi and Mayuni identities, see M. Sehani, 'The Mafwe/Mayuni Crisis: Rival histories and the assertion of identity in the Caprivi', Public History: Forgotten History Conference, University of Namibia, 2000; and Sasa, D., 'The Mayeyi Chieftainship', Public History: Forgotten History Conference, University of Namibia, August 2000.

3 Colonial Administrative Identity I: From 1890 to World War II

The creation of the Caprivi or of the 'Absurdity', as Forssyth called it,¹ originated directly out of the 'Scramble for Africa' when, in 1890, Britain conceded to Germany a small corridor of land jutting off from DSWA to the Zambezi basin. Since then the Caprivi *Zipfel* (literary meaning tip, point, land corner), as it became known, has been variously described as being, an 'outrage to geography'²; 'a dream frustrated'³ and '...the poorest district that has come under my notice'⁴, to one of utmost military strategic importance.⁵ Its inhabitants were regarded as 'little children' by the different colonial administrators, a situation frequently justified on the basis that historically they had never been an independent people, who were for most part a 'subject tribe' especially of the Aluyi. Administrative identity or state formation in the Caprivi is regarded as being rooted in European colonialism.⁶ The only recognition of the existence of polities from pre-colonial times was that of the Lozi state followed by Makololo rule. I disputed this position in chapter two and argued that state formation had predated Lozi domination, as can be shown by the existence of the pre-Lozi Kingdom of Itenge of the Basubiya.

This chapter examines the evolution of colonial administrative control in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* and assesses the way this helped shape Caprivi identities. The nature of colonial administration in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was for the most part indirect and persuasive. Chiefs and headmen were perceived as the most important means of controlling the mainly rural population. With the establishment of the Bantustans under the South African administration, chiefs became traditional elites or politicians. This pitted them against the rising nationalists and intellectuals (see chapter seven) in attempting to gain control of the people. Since the majority of Africans lived in rural areas at this time and though they understood the nature of their subjugation, they often lacked the education and awareness to fully understand South Africa's subtle methods of control. Chiefs could

¹ Forssyth, Ian: 'Significant Corridor: A Close-up Look at the Caprivi Strip'. In *Cape Times* (n.d.) (National Archives in Pretoria, NTS 9656 523/400: Caprivi Zipfel miscellaneous).

² Kruger, 'History of the Caprivi Strip, 1890-1984', 1984: p. 8 (NAN: A.472).

³ Louw: 1979, p. 155.

⁴ Gibbons, in Fisch: 1999, p. 17.

⁵ A.B. Colenbrander, Native Commissioner/Magistrate of ECZ to the Secretary for Native Affairs, dated 20 December 1954.

⁶ Kruger, 1963: p. 3.

collaborate with South Africa's colonial policies and still remain credible in the eyes of the people.

The chiefs fell under the local supervision of one government official. The Caprivi colonial administrative identity was shaped by two related factors, namely history and geography (remoteness), which arguably made the territory difficult to administer. For this reason it was often 'off-loaded' onto other territories. These could be either adjacent or far-flung territories. With regard to the provision of services such as education and health, the administrative burden was transferred to Christian missionaries. This in turn produced Caprivi identities that could be described as 'separate', whilst still forming part of South West Africa's territorial integrity. I would argue that the Caprivi has produced an identity of separateness along the lines created by colonial policy. In recent times this identity of separateness has become translated into a discourse of secessionism (see chapter nine).

Chapter three covers the following developments: the role, influence and interaction of missionaries, traders and travellers in the creation of the Caprivi, the Caprivi as Germany's riparian state on the Zambezi (1890-1914), the Caprivi as a transferable identity (1914-1939, which includes the period when the region was administered from Bechuanaland, 1921-1929) and lastly, the Eastern Caprivi Strip as a Bantu Reserve and Bantustan under South African rule.

Informal Colonialism: Missionaries, Traders, and their Interaction in Caprivi

A considerable number of missionaries and travellers interacted with the Caprivi during the pre-colonial period. The best known are those belonging to the London Missionary Society led by David Livingstone and, following in his footsteps, James Helmore and Roger Price. Livingstone intended to set up a mission station in the southern parts of what is today Caprivi.⁷ The contention here is that the idea was to set up a mission station among the Makololo. This was regarded as a safe area due to its situation on the healthy highlands immediately north of the Victoria Falls. With the death of Sebetwane in July 1851, Sekeletu, his successor, was persuaded to move northwards to the healthier Toka Plateau. Sekeletu's desire was for a missionary to be placed at his capital to protect him from constant attacks by the Matebele.⁸ A mission station among the Makololo was part of Livingstone's twin scheme of spreading the Gospel to two of central Africa's most powerful kingdoms (the

⁷ Pretorius, 1975: p. 31.

⁸ Seaver, 1957: p.376.

Matebele and the Makololo), and establishing 'legitimate commerce' in the area. One of the justifications used for the fundraising needed for this missionary work was the link created between the London Missionary Society and the anti-slavery campaign and the relatively recent (1807) banning of the slave trade throughout the British Empire. Livingstone's journals from this period reveal his concern was to put an end to the rampant slave trade by Arab traders and half-castes (Mambaris), and the cruelty within Sebetwane's country⁹.

On his second trip to Linyanti on 23 May 1853 (his first was in early 1851), Livingstone (or Munare to the Makololo, probably the same as Moneri, the Sesotho name for doctor or missionary) decided to follow one of several established trade routes used by traders from the Atlantic coast to Luanda on the west coast and then retrace his steps on to Linyanti. He left Linyanti on the 3 November 1855 passing through Bechuanaland accompanied by 114 Makololo men carrying elephant tusks to the Indian Ocean, where he boarded a ship for England¹⁰. Sekeletu accompanied him half way as far as Chungwe Namutitima (Subiya for 'The Smoke that Thunders'). The 114 men who accompanied him were left behind at the mouth of the Zambezi, remaining there until he returned from Europe in September 1858. Even though some of them had died of small pox (about 30 according to Likando) and six others were murdered, Livingstone left these men once again undertaking another journey of exploration, during which he discovered Lake Nyasa.¹¹ The London Missionary Society approved Livingstone's proposal for a mission station among the Makololo. The delays caused by personal differences between Livingstone and the Secretary of the Society, Dr. Tidman¹² resulted in the proposed mission being deprived of its 'natural leader', David Livingstone.¹³

In 1859 the London Missionary Society sent James Helmore and Roger Price on a fateful journey to found a mission among the Makololo. They were accompanied by their wives and Helmore's three children with a fourth born during the journey. When the Helmore/Price expedition set out on ox wagon they were hoping to meet Livingstone at Linyanti (he had returned to the Zambezi the previous year), but this was not to be. They arrived at Linyanti at a time when the chief, Sekeletu, had become distrustful of 'southerners' and meted out bad treatment to them, described in the writings of James Chapman, one of the earliest traders to have traversed those parts.¹⁴

⁹ Smith, 1957: pp. 22-23, Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 508.

¹⁰ Likando 1989: 99; Pretorius records 120, 1975: 34.

¹¹ MacNair, 1956: pp. 53-54, 251.

¹² Pretorius, 1975: p. 33.

¹³ Smith, 1957: pp. 25-26.

¹⁴ Chapman, 1868: pp. 99-100.

Their arrival without Livingstone was a great disappointment to Sekeletu. It is reported that he offered the visitors no hospitality and allowed them to be robbed and maltreated¹⁵. Sekeletu allegedly offered poisoned meat to the missionaries which led to the death of Helmore, his wife and two of his children. Roger Price managed to escape with his wife, child and the two surviving Helmore children. His wife and baby died along the way. He was later discovered in a desolate state at Lake Ngami by John Mackenzie, a missionary who was sent to search for Price's party. A variety of theories abound as to the real reasons why Sekeletu treated the Helmore-Price expedition in this cruel manner. One is that the missionaries were caught up in Sekeletu's foreign policy quagmire; he wished to have a missionary of stature, particularly Livingstone (who was married to a daughter of Robert Moffat, a missionary whom Mzilikazi of the Matebele held in high regard) as a deterrent to further Matabele raids. As Sekeletu would later concede to Livingstone: 'Had Ma-Robert (Mrs. Livingstone) come, and then I should have rejoiced, because Mosilikatse would leave her alone, and us, she being a child of Moshete (Moffat).'¹⁶ The second explanation is attributed to Livingstone's failure to return.¹⁷ According to Mr. Conrad Siyanga, a village *Induna* (headman) of Malengalenga, Sekeletu feared that the missionaries would rob him of his people because of the way the latter were attracted to them. He was also envious of their possessions.¹⁸ When Livingstone visited Sekeletu shortly after the deaths of the missionaries, he found their wagons in the hands of the chief.

Lastly, there was the belief that the Makololo never forgave Livingstone for failing to save their chief, Sebetwane, from his ailments. Sebetwane died on 7 July 1851 shortly after he met Livingstone from a wound he sustained while riding a horse. In addition, he was suffering from a bad cough. The horse had been given to Sebetwane by Livingstone as a present. After a few lessons Livingstone suggested that the horse be made to canter. Sebetwane fell off sustaining an injury to his leg. *Induna* (headman) Sangwali asserted that the people believed that this injury was the cause of Sebetwane's death and that the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Helmore and others at the hands of Sekeletu, Sebetwane's nephew, were in response to Sebetwane's death.¹⁹ Apparently Sekeletu feared that the missionaries would do him some harm. I tend to agree with Kruger's assertion that it is probable that the Helmore-Price mission was actually decimated by malaria, to which they were not accustomed, as not only did some members of the party arrive in an already weakened state, this was during

¹⁵ Pretorius, 1975: p. 33.

¹⁶ Wallis, 1954: pp. 395-396.

¹⁷ Pretorius, quoting Clay, 1968: p. 11.

¹⁸ Sasa, 2000: p. 10.

¹⁹ Quoted in Kruger, 1940: p. 9.

the rainy season when malaria is at its peak. Of course they received bad treatment from Sekeletu, owing largely to the unfulfilled promises made to the Makololo by Livingstone. These included the opening up of trade routes to the west and east, which would bring trade and better prospects to their country. It is difficult to establish the source of the story of food poisoning. It appears only in Price's letter, even then as a suspicion as a story told to him by someone close to Sekeletu. Could this be just a story?

It would be an impossible task to list all the traders and travellers who passed through and got involved in business deals in the Caprivi. Several traders are known to have operated from bases within Caprivi during the early twentieth century. It appears that Chalmers, a trader, was the first white man to settle in the Caprivi on 2 April 1904 at Impalila Island where he was given a permit to farm and conduct his carpentry work. Two months later on 29 June he received a letter from Lewanika of the Lozi demanding his withdrawal from the island since it belonged to Barotseland even though, legally, the 1890 Anglo-German Treaty was in force. It appears that Lewanika did not want Chalmers to trade with the Masubiya who had defied his orders to supply salt to him from the island. The island served as an important ivory trade station with Bechuanaland.

A second trade station was established at Ngoma in Caprivi in 1906 by Aristotle Troumbas, Phelany Moody (Muuti) and Jappe (the last two were mulattos). This trade station did not last long because Jappe and Moody murdered Aristotle Troumbas and seized his properties.²⁰ In reply to a letter from Kruger enquiring about Moody's estate, Brittz²¹ had the following to say about Moody (dated 27th October 1941):

Well, I will first of all give you what I can still remember about this jig-saw puzzle of Moody's and his many bastard children in the Caprivi *Zipfel*. From what I was able to gather, Moody arrived in the Caprivi about thirty or forty years ago. He appears to have an unquenchable desire to possess the largest harem in those parts with the result that every second Native woman in the Caprivi *Zipfel* as well as in the adjoining Territories belonged to his harem. When he added a new wife, he usually gave one or two herd of cattle to her. When I arrived in Caprivi *Zipfel* in 1929, Moody had left for Barotseland some years previously. Round about 1934 or 1935, when Moody was about dying he wrote a letter to me wherein he mentioned cattle he had left about twenty years ago with certain Natives in the Caprivi *Zipfel*. Then Moody died and in the copy of his will, he self appointed me as his executor, protector, etc. of all his children and property in the Caprivi *Zipfel*...²²

²⁰ NAZ: BS 2/185, Vol. II.

²¹ Sergeant Brittz was the representative of the South West Africa Administration in Eastern Caprivi from 1929 to 1939.

²² NAN: 19/1/2.

If the Moody²³ of the Ngoma trade station is the same one mentioned by Brittz, then he was an established trader and blacksmith in partnership with a certain H. Chipman at Katima Mulilo in 1914, except that the latter is identified as I. Moody. Moody and Chipman operated from the site where the Roman Catholic Mission stands today. It is here they had their boat factory.

At the beginning of 1921 two more people were issued with trading licenses. They were M. Michelson at Linyanti and J.A. Legge at Nsundwa, a place in the Masubiya area not far from Schuckmannsburg. Michelson was a Dane from Schleswig Holstein, who was well educated and spoke German fluently. He had two brothers, both captains in the German-East Africa Line. It is known that he had resided in the Caprivi *Zipfel* for some 10 to 12 years, had a good reputation and had previously been a trader in Basutoland. Michelson was later given a general dealers' licence to trade at Kabulabula, which became his permanent place of residence in the Caprivi. He entered into a union with a Musubiya woman by whom he had two sons. Charlie, his elder son, joined the army in the Second World War and became a sergeant in the Special Company, Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. Afterwards he entered the civil administration in the Caprivi as clerk/interpreter.

J.A. Legge was a member of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Police who had been posted to Schuckmannsburg in 1914. At the time he was 57 years of age and single. He had formerly been in the South African Constabulary and had retired from the Protectorate Police having been certified as of 'good character'. Legge was given a trading site at Impalila Island during the Bechuanaland Protectorate administration where he ran cattle and cultivated land. Until recently, the dipping tank he built on the island was the only such facility in the Caprivi. In addition to having the general dealer licence, Legge was authorized to deal in arms and ammunition. Kruger recalls coming across Legge's son named George (by a Musubiya mother) who had abandoned his Caprivi identity for that of Northern Rhodesia. Legge himself left Impalila Island in the 1930s to settle in Livingstone.

In the out of the ordinary circumstances on the secluded Caprivi frontier, it was believed that Europeans could 'go native'. A local story tells of the death of two derelicts who had 'gone native': Harris Johns (who had adopted the name 'John the Greek' because he was a Cypriot Greek) and Ben Johnson. The incident took place during the period the territory was administered from Bechuanaland. It occurred in Angola, but since the boundary had not then been defined it was assumed that the location was the Caprivi *Zipfel*. These two men lived by poaching elephants and hippos and selling the ivory, hides and fats. John the Greek boasted to Colonel Statham (*With My Wife Across Africa by Canoe and Caravan*) that he

²³ There is a high probability that Phelany Moody is the same person as Isaac Moody.

had killed 500 hippos, mostly by stalking them bare-footed on moonlight nights when they came ashore to graze. The locals called him 'Miela' or 'Mielies' probably because he cultivated a large area with mealies, irrigating his land by a canal he had cut from the Kwando River.

An argument arose between Johnson and John the Greek as to who had shot a certain elephant. This led Ben Johnson to shoot John the Greek while they were enjoying a sundowner. The native servants, concubines and children deserted the camp and the son of the murdered man proceeded to Schuckmannsburg to report the matter. Ben Johnson fled to Angola where he was warned off by the Portuguese and returned to his camp to be joined by his hangers-on. Upon hearing that police from Schuckmannsburg were on their way to arrest him, he collected all his stock and other belongings and destroyed everything, throwing metal and other objects which were not consumable by fire into the river. He then presented a sovereign to each of those present and to his offspring, stripped and burnt his clothing, and eventually stood on the edge of the river stark naked with his rifle and one cartridge. He waded as far as he could and blew his head off. Quite a sad side of white life in Africa, Colonel Statham concluded.²⁴

Just some 14 miles down the river lived 'Mafoota' or 'Mafuta', Johnson's nearest white neighbour, nicknamed 'mafuta' by the locals because he was fat. His name was actually Keys. Keys had a store and dwelling-place in those parts of the Caprivi, otherwise not much is known about him. It was Keys whom Seiner had met on the Mashi in 1906 and who was present when Chief Simasiku Mamili was sent by his father to pay respects to Captain Streitwolf in 1909.

Close to Katima Mulilo there lived another fairly prominent resident of Caprivi, Tommy Harris, a son of Harris Johns, identified above as John the Greek. Following the murder of his father, his mother fled with him, then a baby, to her parental home in the Caprivi. According to Kruger, Tommy Harris would have been born at the beginning of 1923. Tommy Harris established his village eight miles southeast of Katima Mulilo where he ran a restaurant in Ngweze, a Black residential area of Katima Mulilo, during the colonial period. (Descendents of the Harris family still live in Katima Mulilo at the present time.)

Another European of interest is Robert da Costa Blake. He was an eccentric millionaire previously from Cape Town who was granted a site on lease at the Katima Mulilo Rapids by the High Commissioner in the first half of the 1920s. Blake owned racehorses and had a farm elsewhere in South West Africa he would occasionally visit in his light aircraft. From there he would fly to the Caprivi to stay at his home at the rapids, which he used mainly as a base for his activities as a hunter and occasional capturer of wild animals in Northern Rho-

²⁴ Kruger, 1984; Trollope, 1940: p.7.

desia and Angola. Blake's caretaker, Mr. Side Mubyana Mabate, later became *Induna* (village headman) of Sibbinda in the Caprivi. The Katima Mulilo site was taken away from him during the war as he had stopped visiting it and had failed to renew his annual lease agreement.

This account would be incomplete without the mention of William (Bill) Finaughty²⁵ widely remembered in the Caprivi. 'Fin' as he was affectionately called hailed from Pietersburg in the then northern Transvaal, arriving in the Caprivi in the 1940s. His parents ran a hotel at Chunie' Spoort some 20 miles south of that town. William Finaughty was posted to Kazungula in Bechuanaland Protectorate by WNLA, and later at Katima Mulilo in Northern Rhodesia. The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) was an organized labour hire company recruiting migrant labourers from most southern African countries for work on the Rand mines in South Africa. After a year or two in that service he developed interests in trading and was granted (1945) an extensive general dealer's site at the Katima Mulilo Rapids. His business grew to include a large shop, butchery, workshop for repairing motor vehicles (he was a mechanic and worked as such for WNLA), carpentry, stores for goods and produce of all kinds, compound for local staff, cattle kraal, and gardens. He had two tennis courts, for he loved playing that sport. Over time he acquired other sites scattered across the Caprivi with two outside the territory, one at Katima Mulilo in Northern Rhodesia, the other at Kavimba in Bechuanaland Protectorate. While Finaughty's businesses had a slow start, events in the country and neighbouring territories turned the tide in his favour, largely because of the security situation. The independence of Zambia prevented the movement of people into that country to buy goods freely. Later, however, the increased flow of SADF personnel into Caprivi and expanded workforce contributed towards a cash economy and consequently the buying power at Katima Mulilo. The arrival of his nephew, Douglas Finaughty as manager and his wife Pauline, helped the business grow.

The Bantu Investment Corporation (BIC) arrived in the Caprivi in 1967. It was understood that the aim was to build up local prospective businessmen so that in time all enterprises would be taken over by them. William Finaughty was to sell everything to BIC to enable it to achieve its objectives. This he did at a fair price enabling him to retire a wealthy man to the Victoria Falls around 1970/1. He suffered a severe stroke soon after and was an invalid until his death in 1975.

The above description does not claim to be a complete account of all Europeans who left their mark on the Caprivi. However, it is a good overview of those who did so. It is clear that the 'Administration' was not simply perceived as consisting of formal Government of-

²⁵ The Finaughty in *The Recollections of William Finaughty, Elephant Hunter 1864-1875*, edited with an introduction by Edward C. Tabler, was an uncle or great-uncle of his. (no date and place of publication).

ficials issuing papers and policies. The wider network of white 'outsiders' who established themselves in Caprivi were perceived to be part of the small colonial settler society in the region.

Two vital issues became apparent namely that mixed marriages were very prevalent and formed part of the fabric of the Caprivi at that time and secondly, that the authorities were doing nothing to discourage such unions. Many children fathered by European men were born to local women. This probably contributed to the belief the authorities held that many Europeans in the Caprivi had 'gone native', implying that their standard of living had deteriorated as had their 'moral fibre'. The administration, however, could do little since it was not part of the policy to encourage whites to settle in the territory. Unlike other parts of the mandated territory, no incentives were provided to encourage white settlement in the Caprivi. This was in contrast to the Police Zone where the German colonial administration confiscated land in 1906 and created farms to encourage German settlers. Its successor, the South African colonial administration gave financial incentives in the Land Settlement Proclamation of 1920 to encourage white South African settlers. The mere fact that those few whites despite their being 'derelicts' and 'native', managed to settle in the territory and were able to withstand malaria and other diseases challenged the official policy of discouraging white settlers. All of this contributed to the creation of some aspects of Caprivi identities, namely that they were isolated, poor, backward, and dependent.

The Creation of the Caprivi Identities: Germany's Riparian State on the Zambezi

At the suspension of the 1890 Anglo-German Treaty in 1914 the territory comprising the Caprivi had (at least in principle) been under German rule for 24 years. In practice, however, Germany's presence in the Caprivi was just five years old. German presence in the Caprivi can be most usefully divided into two periods, 1890 to 1909 and 1909 to 1914. This section will follow this division in discussing a variety of related themes, namely the spatial creation of the Caprivi identities and the administration of the Caprivian 'absurdity' during the German period up until World War I.

Creating the Caprivi Identities

The foundation for the construction of a Caprivi identity was laid down during pre-colonial times (chapter two). During that time the native inhabitants of the area roamed freely throughout their different areas. They were conscious of the extent of their spheres of influence. However, the scope of modern Caprivi identities has its roots in the so-called Scramble

for Africa, which caused a shrinking of the pre-colonial geographical dimensions of this entity. The boundaries of the Caprivi have been defined either by treaty, agreement or exchange of notes, but only portions have actually been demarcated.

The two most important treaties that account for the creation of the Caprivi are the Portuguese-German Convention of 30 December 1886 and the Anglo-German Treaty of 1 July 1890. According to the Portuguese-German Convention, the boundary ran from Andara to the Katima Mulilo Rapids. Thus the 'straight line from Andara to Katima Mulilo no longer simply formed an international boundary between South West Africa and Angola, but also between South West Africa and Northern Rhodesia from the Kwando to the Zambezi.'²⁶ The so-called Protectorate Act of 27 June 1890 placed King Lewanika under the protection of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) at the behest of Chief Khama of the Mangwato²⁷ as a deterrent against internal feuds and attacks from the Matebele. The Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 11 June 1891 placed Barotseland within the British sphere of influence to the north of the Caprivi.

The 1890 Anglo-German Treaty was a result of protracted negotiations between the two imperial powers in which Great Britain, recognizing an extension of Germany's sphere of influence, allowed Germany access to the Zambezi. Zeller has argued that the Caprivi Corridor was an insignificant issue in the negotiations for the 1890 treaty, a 'by-product in the course of a far more important exchange of territory'. He continues, 'the islands Heligoland and Zanzibar were central to the German-British agreement and Germany made very far-reaching concessions to the British interests in East Africa to regain the small, but symbolically and, at that time, strategically crucial rock in the north sea'.²⁸ This might well have been the case. However, Germany had already gained access to the Zambezi some three or four years before this treaty was signed via the 1886 Portuguese-German Convention, the latter providing a boundary from Andara to Katima Mulilo Rapids *at the Zambezi*. A close look at the wording of the treaty reveals that the key provision was 'free access to the Zambezi'. This was intended to guarantee access and prevent an encroachment of English territory into the German strip embedded in the Portuguese-German Convention. The dilemma for Great Britain at this time was that this German area of influence in central Africa (except for access to Zambezi) had not been - and needed to be - defined. Whatever it was that Britain intended to do in that region, she felt confined by this anomaly. This was an important factor in the creation of the Caprivi. Political rather than economic factors were therefore

²⁶ Hangula, 1993: pp. 47-48.

²⁷ Mackintosh, 1907: p. 382.

²⁸ Zeller, 2000: pp. 34-35.

crucial in the creation of this entity. 'For the time being its political value is greater than its economic worth', Seiner reported.²⁹

Lord Selborne, then High Commissioner of South Africa, was aware of this aspect when the issue of the settlement of the southern boundary of the Caprivi was being discussed. The British Colonial Office had received various suggestions from the authorities in Bechuanaland and in South Africa. Most important among these were the suggestions of Major H.J. Goold-Adams, Resident Commissioner in Bechuanaland, and Lieutenant-Colonel Francis W. Panzera, former Resident Commissioner at Mafikeng. Goold-Adams suggested that Germany should renounce the right of 'free access' to the Zambezi and, in exchange, the boundary of GSWA between the 22° S and 18°S would be extended eastward and run along the 21° 15' E, so as to give an equivalent piece of territory to Germany.³⁰ According to Akweenda the territory suggested by Goold-Adams was smaller. Alternatively, Goold-Adams suggested Britain might agree to a strip of land south of the 18th parallel extending eastward from the 21° E to about 23° 30' E.³¹ Panzera disagreed with the suggestion made by Goold-Adams. On 10 December 1907 he advised the High Commissioner that Britain should instead acquire the whole tongue of the country owned by Germany north of Bechuanaland.³² According to Panzera, to give Germany a territory north of the 22° would interfere with the vested interests of the white farmers. Panzera suggested that the Caprivi Strip could be exchanged for the territory situated north of the Nossob River, south of the 22° S, west of the 21° E, and east of the 20° E. According to Panzera, the suggested area was valueless, caused considerable trouble to the British and had no recognized vested interests in it.³³ He feared that if the German interpretation were adopted, the boundary would cut about four miles south of the Colonial Administration's police camp, which was at Muhembo Drift on the west bank of the Okavango River. According to Akweenda, not only was the Muhembo Drift the only place where the police could cross the Okavango River, but was extremely important as it enabled the Colonial Administration to control the border and prevent 'diseased cattle' from entering Bechuanaland.³⁴ It was reportedly built at a cost of £575.00.

Even though Lord Selborne requested the Colonial Office to propose either the Goold-Adams or the Panzera solutions, Lord Crewe, former Secretary of State for Colonies, advised

²⁹ *Report of Expedition made by F. Seiner from Katima Mulilo to Libebe.*

³⁰ Akweenda, S., *International Law and the Protection of Namibia's Territorial Integrity: Boundaries and Territorial Claims*. The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1996, p. 134.

³¹ F.O. 637/79, Folio 8448, in Akweenda, *ibid.*

³² Panzera to High Commissioner, 10 December 1907, para. 10, F.O. 367/79. See also The Colonial Office List, 1907, p. 580; in Akweenda, *ibid.*

³³ Dispatch No. 2487, F.O. 371/5757, p. 240.

³⁴ Akweenda, 1996, p.134.

against communicating the above suggestions to the Germans who might evoke a counter proposal, possibly even the exchange of the Strip for Walvis Bay.³⁵ On 22 July 1908 the British Ambassador in Berlin presented an exchange offer to Germany in the form of an inferior part of the Kalahari in the southwestern part of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. This was of course unacceptable to Germany.³⁶ Politically, the importance of the Caprivi Strip at this time was not so very insignificant as the negotiations that resulted in the 1890 treaty show. Let us examine what Selborne had to say:

Politically, Caprivi Strip is most disadvantageous to Britain ... such a strip, penetrating like a wedge between three British Administrations (Bechuanaland, Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia), is sure to be a source of trouble. Further, the strip could not be delimited without causing annoyance and irritation to the Barotse and Batawana Chiefs who lived in that area.³⁷

It is argued elsewhere that ultimately Germany desired to be a neighbour in central Africa to Britain, to be '...a thorn in the English flesh,'³⁸ particularly during a time when Cecil Rhodes desired to push northwards with his grandiose schemes such as the Cape to Cairo rail route. Coincidentally, this would either terminate at or cross the Zambezi, over which Germany had gained access. The scheme envisioned an east-west link, either by waterways or rail links. This was to be a crossroad. Was the creation of the Caprivi Strip an attempt to stem Cecil Rhodes's push northwards? If yes, would this make the Caprivi less important in relation to Germany's other colonial projects?

Richard Rothe, a merchant from Outjo, came to investigate minerals and other deposits such as coal in the Caprivi in order to determine the economic value of the area. He reports the importance of the Caprivi Strip in relation to the Cape to Cairo project: 'Owing to the increased importance of German Barotseland to German S.W.Africa, in consequence of the opening of the Cape to Cairo railway to Victoria Falls, I decided to make the acquaintance of this little known land and people.' Rothe suggested an alternative to the Cape to Cairo route by extending the Otavi line (GSWA) as far as Katima Mulilo or Sesheke, emphasizing the important geographical position of this area in relation to Britain:

There is no question as to this trans-African line being a financial success, for both passengers and mails would undoubtedly elect to shorten the journey by 1300 km by taking this route in preference to that of the Cape to Cairo railway. Cape 2640 km to Victoria Falls whereas W.

³⁵ Letter No. 1280/1908 from Lord Elgin, signed H.W. Just, to F.O., 10 March 1908, F.O. 367/79.

³⁶ Fisch, 1999: pp. 16-17.

³⁷ Selborne to Secretary of State, 23 December 1907, F.O. 367/79, Folio 8448, In Akweenda, *ibid*, p.133.

³⁸ Seiner, in Kruger 1984: p.8.

African line at most 1300; shorten voyage; more interesting country; further colonization, Rothe concluded.³⁹

It is often remarked that the colonial administrators missed an opportunity to reverse 'the outrage to geography and all common sense'⁴⁰ when they failed to incorporate the Caprivi either into Bechuanaland Protectorate or into Northern Rhodesia. As both were under British control, it was assumed that this could be done with less difficulty. As Selborne argues above, this was equally a Pandora's Box. The Barotse believed the Caprivi belonged to them, as indeed they continued to be given privileges to fish and cut reeds in its waters even after the signing of the 1890 Treaty. On the other hand, the Batawana Chiefs had vested interests in the Caprivi Strip. Could an attempt to 'give back' the strip have flamed other conflicts and resulted in a further partition of the territory? While it may be argued that Barotseland had a stronger claim in this case, there is no basis to exclude Bechuanaland. In fact, as Akweenda reveals, even though the independent Government of Botswana did not challenge the southern boundary of the Caprivi at independence, maps produced in that country, both official and private, indicate otherwise.⁴¹

Of interest here is the proposal by Mr. Tsheko, an elected member of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Legislative Council. On 22 November 1963, prior to the independence of Botswana, he proposed that the government take steps to resume responsibility for the administration of the Caprivi Strip.⁴² Akweenda believes Tsheko wished to achieve more than just administrative control, maintaining that Tsheko wished Britain or newly independent Botswana to claim title to the territory in question. Tsheko argued that the Caprivi Strip was part and parcel of Ngamiland administered by the Chief and District Commissioner for Ngamiland, and, furthermore, that the indigenous inhabitants of the strip are one and the same as the inhabitants of Ngamiland and the Chobe, and that the 'people of SWA have no interest whatsoever in the Strip because they know it has never belonged to them'. For him, the disadvantage of the Strip (which he called 'this part of Bechuanaland'), lay in the fact that it cut Bechuanaland off completely from a common frontage of two African states - Northern Rhodesia and Angola. Economically, he reasoned the connection between Bechuanaland and Angola is very important as it affords Bechuanaland access to the sea for both exports and imports.

³⁹ Rothe, quoted in Kruger 1984: p. 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16. The quotation is found in Frank Debenham, *Kalahari Sand*, London: G. Bell and Sons, p. 87.

⁴¹ Akweenda, 1996, p. 141.

⁴² *Ibid.*

Connection with Northern Rhodesia on a much wider frontage than was the case could link Bechuanaland with the rest of the African continent and provide it with an outlet to its beef market. The motion was supported unreservedly by Mr. Masire, member of the Legislative Council, who declared: 'Here at any rate we have a territory which is wrongly occupied and which is so vital to our economy and ... to our defence'.⁴³ Masire urged the Council to 'press on Government to do something about this Caprivi Strip'.⁴⁴



Figure 2: Namibian President Sam Nujoma and Botswana's President Quett Masire meet in Caprivi in 1992 for talks about the Kasikili Island conflict

It is significant that the dispute between Botswana and Namibia over Kasikili/Sedudu began during Quett Masire's presidency. The missing part of the equation in this contest for the Caprivi is the indigenous people of the territory. Their wish as to which territory they should belong to was ignored. Suffice to reiterate here what I have recorded in chapter seven concerning consultations for the incorporation of SWA into the Union in 1946: the Native Commissioner reports that the people of the Caprivi looked on any return to Barotse rule with fear, in other words, they would not have willingly returned to that exploitative regime.

⁴³ *Africa Research Bulletin*, [Political, Social and Cultural], Vol. 1, No. 1 [January 1964], p. 4.

⁴⁴ Akweenda, *op.cit.*, p.142.

This discussion has illustrated how the Caprivi came to be created, a creation best described as a 'political and geographical freak'.⁴⁵ It became clear that its spatial identity was highly contested. It formed a corridor - pointing like a pistol or dagger at the heart of central southern Africa. Regardless of the shape it was to take and the implications of its existence, its foundation was to provide Germany with open access to the Zambezi, human labour and other resources, such as coal, diamonds and blue earth believed at the time to be in abundance. For some the creation of the Caprivi was to serve '... as a jumping off place for further territorial acquisition and if the strip had been all it was believed to be, it certainly might have given Germany a strategic advantage, for it points like a pistol at the heart of Rhodesia...'.⁴⁶

When this perception of plenty came to naught, Germany used the Caprivi as bait for territorial exchange, desiring to receive Walvis Bay from the British. The perception of its uselessness had been largely established and its inhabitants were in any case portrayed as no more than little serfs of the Barotse who were of little significance. They were regarded, in fact, as Barotse. Even the territory was not referred to as GSWA, laying down the foundation for separateness from the Mandated Territory. Most maps dating from the German period refer to the area as the German Zambezi region or German Barotseland or as Deutsch Bechuanaland or Sambezi Korridor.⁴⁷ Geographically, and on the map, the Caprivi is embedded in the Zambezi region, far removed from the rest of SWA. This would confer on it the attribute of a remote and unhealthy place, which is a strong constitutive element of a Caprivi identity.

Administering the Caprivi during the German Colonial Rule

A Sphere of Influence, 1890-1909

It is commonly accepted that the area which constituted the Caprivi Strip was a 'no-man's land' between 1890 and 1909. This claim is refuted elsewhere. Rather, there was no effective European presence or administration; the indigenous people owned the land under the effective control of their tribal leaders. Another misinterpretation is that Germany lost interest in the area following the realization that the Zambezi River was not navigable and that the territory was a useless or poor piece of colonial acquisition, which is why, it is believed, it took almost 19 years to establish an administration in the area and then only after several

⁴⁵ *East London Daily Dispatch*, 28 August 1929, in Kruger, 1984, p. 14.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Fisch 1999: p. 12 and Zeller 2000: p. 8.

complaints from the British. This perception is not entirely correct. Factors accounting for Germany's long delay in setting up a presence in the Caprivi Strip are discussed by Fisch (1999), Zeller (2000), Flint (2003),⁴⁸ and others who support the theory of 'uselessness' or frustrated dreams in this regard. While recognizing that there was no German presence in the Caprivi during this time, the territory remained a German sphere of influence. A sphere of influence designated the 'territory [as] exclusively reserved for future occupation by a power which had effectively occupied adjoining territories.'⁴⁹ Hall expands on the meaning of a sphere of influence:

... [it] indicates the regions which geographically are adjacent to or politically group themselves naturally, with possessions or Protectorates, but which have not actually been so reduced into control that the minimum of the powers which are implied in a Protectorate can be exercised with tolerable regularity. It represents an understanding, which enables a state to reserve to itself a right of excluding other European powers from territories that are of importance to it politically as affording means of future expansion to its existing dominions or Protectorates, or strategically as preventing civilized neighbours from occupying a dominant military position.⁵⁰

From this it can be understood that the purposes of spheres of influence were firstly, to constantly and gradually extend the occupation of the colonizing State into the hinterland and secondly, to avoid conflict with other states. There was no given time period for occupation of a sphere of influence from the date of declaration. Oppenheim⁵¹ and Lindley⁵² remind us that a declaration of a sphere of influence did not in itself vest territorial rights of a legal nature in the State exercising the influence. That is why declarations of spheres of influence were normally followed by 'agreements' which served to delimit the sphere of influence but amounted to a 'promise on the part of each of the parties to it to abstain from doing anything that might lead to the acquisition of sovereign rights within the sphere allotted to the other'⁵³; Akweenda refers to this as 'a contractual right in the nature of forbearance or preclusion'.⁵⁴ It should be noted that agreements to respect spheres of influence were only binding on parties to the agreement. Hall maintains that the agreements 'warn off friendly

⁴⁸ Flint, Lawrence, 2003.

⁴⁹ L. Oppenheim, 1955, p. 562; see also M.F. Lindley, 1926, pp. 207-236; G.B. Davis, 1908, p. 109.

⁵⁰ W. H. Hall, 1894, p.228.

⁵¹ Oppenheim, *International Law: A Treatise*, p. 562.

⁵² Lindley, *The Acquisition and Government of Backward Territory in International Law*, p.236.

⁵³ Lindley, *The Acquisition and Government of Backward Territory in International Law*, p. 207.

⁵⁴ Akweenda, 1996, p. 10.

powers' but do not prevent 'covert hostility' from third parties.⁵⁵ Hence the British could not intervene or even acquire the Caprivi Strip because they were party to the 1 July 1890 Anglo-German Treaty, whereas they did lay claim to the territory situated between Angola and Mozambique even though it was within Portugal's sphere of influence as recognized in the German-Portuguese Declaration of 30 December 1886. The British, when laying claim to Mashonaland and Matabeleland, which Portugal recognized through the Anglo-Portuguese Agreement of 11 June 1891⁵⁶, stated that they had a better claim (an agreement with King Lobengula) and that there had been no 'effective occupation' by the Portuguese.

In summary, the Caprivi *Zipfel* was administered as Germany's sphere of influence only between 1890 and 1909. This accounted for the tardy establishment of a European presence in the territory because spheres of influence are, by their nature, demarcations of future action or occupation that do not have a time limit. A colonial power could decide not to occupy a sphere of influence after all. It is argued here that Germany did not lose interest in the Caprivi, as is often claimed, nor was it legally bound to set up an administration in the territory as per British protestations. This is because spheres of influence do not by their nature vest territorial rights. Germany considered infrequent reports on this sphere of influence (Rothe 1904; Seiner 1905) a sufficient administrative tool during this period. This was not tolerated by the British who complained about the territory providing a safe haven for wrongdoers and poachers. Germany's attitude was that it was not necessary to incur the expense of maintaining officials in the territory, noting that those 'committing misdemeanors were in any case mainly British subjects and therefore a British responsibility'.⁵⁷ While no doubt all sorts of white vagabonds inhabited the Caprivi Strip, it appears British concerns were not purely administrative but were also motivated by a desire to retake the territory. Seiner believed that the British were merely piling up evidence to show Germany's incompetence as a pretext to lay a claim to the Caprivi Strip. Incidentally, Seiner reported that Britain was doing the same to the Portuguese Government accusing them of allowing Mambaris (half-castes) to conduct slave trading on its soil. Zeller supports this line of argument; he writes that British misgivings were situated within a broader international debate about Germany's capability to run her overseas territories in a sound manner, sparked by the brutal handling of the Nama and Herero uprising and similar events in Tanganyika.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Hall, *A Treatise on the Foreign Powers and Jurisdiction of the British Crown*, p. 229.

⁵⁶ 83 B.F.S.P., pp. 27-41, in Akweenda, 1996, p. 11.

⁵⁷ Von Schuckmann to Selborne, 6 March 1908, BS2/4, NAZ.

⁵⁸ Zeller, 2000: p. 37.

Ma-Dostela⁵⁹ in *Der Caprivi Zipfel*, 1909-1914⁶⁰

Germany's attitude to events in the Caprivi Strip promptly changed when German nationals began to engage in importing potentially diseased cattle, arms and ammunition from Northern Rhodesia and Angola into GSWA through the Caprivi Strip.⁶¹ What was perceived before as a British problem now became a mutual concern. It was then that Captain Kurt Streitwolf (Kambungu to the Masubiya; and Kataramatunga to the Mafwe, meaning 'one who surveys the country') was sent to the territory that did not even have a fixed official name (see above). It was in 1911 that the name *Caprivi Zipfel* first appeared in official documents. Zeller has convincingly argued that the name is wrongly understood to have been given to honour Duke Leo von Caprivi, the German Chancellor whose signature is affixed to the Heligoland-Zanzibar treaty.⁶² Rather, it bore an undertone of ridicule aimed to mock the man whose poor 'state-crafting' had left the colony of GSWA with a disgraceful territorial appendix, allegedly without value.

Kambungu (Streitwolf) departed Gobabis on 15 November 1908 arriving at the Zambezi River opposite the British station of Sesheke in February 1909.⁶³ Accompanied by fourteen Herero and Nama and three whites, Kambungu's expedition travelled through Bechuanaland equipped with one wagon, one cart, three horses, six mules and thirty oxen. The passage through Bechuanaland was a difficult one, but afforded Kambungu an opportunity to familiarize himself, through discussions with Lieutenant Hanney (the British official stationed at Kazungula in the Bechuanaland Protectorate), with the English approach to native administration in their colonies. Kambungu recorded places en route, among others Sebetwane's Drift, Mababe and Letschuane's (Liswani, of the Masubiya, more correctly Chika) - the first of these named after the Makololo leader. He crossed the Chobe River at Ngoma after making his way to Kazungula to see Captain Eason, the Bechuanaland Protectorate magistrate, stationed there. It was at Ngoma that Kambungu received the news, apparently for the first time (from three white men) that the Malozi had moved out of the Caprivi taking all the cattle, their own as well as those of the subject people. From

⁵⁹ The local moniker for German-speakers (*Deutsche*).

⁶⁰ *Der Caprivizipfel - The Caprivi Strip*, the title of Captain Streitwolf's book.

⁶¹ See Flint (2003).

⁶² Zeller, 2000, pp. 35-36; see also Zeller, W. & Kangumu, B., 'From Apartheid Bantustan to Namibia's Socio-economic Tail-Light: Caprivi Under Old and New Indirect Rule', Melber, Henning, (ed.), *Cross-examining Transition in Namibia: Socio-economic and Ideological Transformation since Independence*, Uppsala: The Nordic Africa Institute, 2007 (Forthcoming).

⁶³ Flint (2003) incorrectly writes that Kambungu arrived in Caprivi in November 1908 from Gobabis. This was actually his date of departure.

Ngoma Kambungu made for the Zambezi passing through Lusese, a Masubiya village, on the way.

The effects of the 1904 to 1907 Herero-Nama uprising on the turn of events in the Caprivi Strip have not yet been fully appreciated. When the arrival of the *ma-Dostela* (the best the old people could make of *Deutsche*) was imminent, oral history tells of the people being forewarned (probably by the British) that the Germans were cruel and killed and ate people. One conclusion could be that the news of the genocidal suppression of the uprising travelled ahead of the Germans. This accounts for the Lozi fleeing, and a number of people, especially Masubiya, choosing to cross either into Bechuanaland or Northern Rhodesia. Those who stayed behind went into hiding in the thickets of the forests or on islands. The choice by Kambungu (discussed below) to reconstruct tribal administration, a sort of indirect rule which he partly copied from the English in Bechuanaland, should thus be interpreted as flowing from a desire to counteract the negative perceptions people had of German rule as a result of the 1904 to 1907 genocidal war. Kambungu reportedly wrote letters to his superiors in which he expressed his 'admiration for the English approach and his regret about the mistakes the Germans had made in their treatment of the Herero'.⁶⁴

Kambungu immediately set about establishing a town on a slight elevation, known locally as Luhonono (*Terminalia Sericea* tree), which he named Schuckmannsburg in honour of Bruno von Schuckmann, the imperial governor of GSWA at the time. Schuckmannsburg was ideally located. It was directly across the Zambezi from Sesheke (Mwandi), which was the administrative centre of the British in Northern Rhodesia and afforded the *ma-Dostela* proximity to 'civilization', a post office and the Paris Mission hospital. The duties of the Imperial Resident included the establishment of effective administration, keeping undesirable immigrants out of the territory, removing white people of bad reputation⁶⁵ and clarifying 'the state of the land and its people'.⁶⁶ Of importance was the need to forge a spirit of harmony with the inhabitants of adjacent territories. What did the *ma-Dostela* achieve with such a mandate? The most eventful year during the German period in the Caprivi was undoubtedly that of the one-year tenure of Kambungu (Streitwolf). Fisch describes Kambungu's work as thus:

In one brief year, Streitwolf had not only managed to make proposals to his government regarding the future of the Caprivi Strip, but had also laid the foundations for a stable, local administration. At least 2 000 people had returned from British territory. The population

⁶⁴ Streitwolf 1911: 12, 72, in Fisch 1999, p. 76.

⁶⁵ Von Schuckmann to Selborne, 16 October 1908, A3/16/1, NAZ.

⁶⁶ DSWAZ, No. 86, 1908, in Zeller 2000, 37.

appeared to be peaceful and disciplined. They owned only 28 firearms and had no military strength. Psychologically, too, the Subiya had broken the link with the Lozi.⁶⁷

Four 'achievements' can be discerned from the above: the completion of a report on the character of the territory and people, the creation of a local administration through chiefs, the establishment of peace both within and without the territory and the overthrow of the exploitative Lozi regime.

A comment will be made on the advent of local administration and on what has become known as 'the Masubiya Cattle Case', which seems to be one of the most significant incidents of the German period in the Caprivi Strip. As discussed above, Kambungu did not have much option but to decide to administer the indigenous population through local leaders in a system similar to the indirect rule practiced in British territories. The policy of indirect rule and appointment of local leaders was not Kambungu's. Both Rothe (1904) and Seiner (1905) had recommended this model long before the arrival of Streitwolf. Consider the following by Rothe:

Letia's (the leader of the MaSubia) nervous attitude is also shown by the extremely slack discipline prevailing in German Barotseland. I am of the opinion that the paramount chief in the German territory, Mamili of Mamili, is well aware of this fact. His promotion to the position of head of the German Barotse when the country is definitely occupied might, under favorable circumstances, enable us to keep those native tribes which are composed of Maijes (Mayeyi) and Masubias (the latter have given their name to the country in the native language) but the possibility must be faced, in the event of the establishment of German administration, of the kaffirs leaving German territory, if ordered to do by Lewanika, actuated, not by hostility towards us, but by their personal attachment to him.⁶⁸

The above suggestion was repeated by Seiner: 'In view of the exclusive policy of the British, it should be extremely desirable to find some happy solution of the question of the relations of the German Barotses to those living under British rule by making Captain [Chief] Mamili head of the German Barotses; this should be done as soon as the administration has been in-

⁶⁷ Fisch, 1999, p. 103; after Streitwolf 1911: 217, 227.

⁶⁸ From Letter and Report from Richard Rothe, of 29 March 1906, Heidelberg, in Kruger 1984, p. 4. Rothe's identification of only two groups, the Mayeyi and Masubiya, as the occupants of the Caprivi Strip at this time is misleading, as is his misplaced conception that Chief Mamili was paramount chief. This wrongly feeds into Fisch (1999), when she argues that when the Masubiya royal dynasty fled into Bechuanaland, Chief Mamili, being the 'only' Chief left in the territory, exercised powers over the Masubiya as well. There is no evidence to suggest this or even that he ever ruled over the Masubiya. The most common form of control over a people in those days was through imposition and collecting of tax, in money or kind, and the appointment of Indunas (headmen) in such areas to oversee affairs. Without evidence of any of this exercised by Chief Mamili over the Masubiya, such claims are difficult to support.

augurated. If only he be wisely handled, I have the utmost confidence in the tact and ability of this chief. If this was done the question of the natives and the security of stock would be settled once and for all, and the support of the Barotses ... would be of the greatest advantage to German S.W. Africa.’⁶⁹ Clearly, Rothe and Seiner’s suggestion to appoint Chief Mamili of Linyanti, whom they incorrectly describe as a paramount chief, was motivated by the fear of a revolt by the Marotse against the German occupation of the Caprivi Strip. They reasoned that appointing Mamili, whom the Marotse had already appointed at Linyanti, would serve to appease them and ensure that the Lozi felt they still controlled the people of the Caprivi Strip. This suggestion was taken up by Streitwolf on his arrival. He made several overtures to the Lozi to come back to the Caprivi, particularly to Letia, to assist him in administering the territory, a request that Letia rejected. Streitwolf soon regretted his initial impulse as can be seen from his later remarks:

It was as well that this did not happen. It would have been simply impossible to have had a subject of Luanika’s [Lewanika] in our Territory as quasi-Chief. The clear-cut separation was the only correct way and this I strove for while keeping within my rights because Luanika had renounced our country.⁷⁰

The other fear was that the remaining people would follow Lewanika into Barotseland if he ordered them. Indeed, Flint (2003) reports that Letia actively tried to persuade the ‘remainder of the Caprivians, mainly consisting of the Subia to whom Litia was himself closely aligned (his mother and wives were Subia) to follow the cattle north’. This was a misplaced fear. Streitwolf reported that ‘... the Malozi were disliked by the Masubia, otherwise they would all have gone across the river ... leaving the Caprivi depopulated in those parts’.⁷¹ This is why conclusions, such as the one drawn by Flint that the Masubiya and others in the Caprivi shed their Loziness thanks to the coming of the Germans and events such as the Masubiya cattle case, are not entirely correct. As shown in chapter two, people never lost their own local identities regardless of the dominance of the Lozi, and in fact never regarded themselves as Lozis. They continually sought for ways to shake off the Lozi identity; German colonialism just aided or gave impetus to those attempts. It appears that even Chief Mamili, himself a Lozi, did not want to follow ‘Loziness’ even when he was recalled, partly because of his advanced age but also because of other factors, perhaps a dislike of the Lozi identity. This is revealed by his remarks after Streitwolf (Kambungu) told him that

⁶⁹ Report of Expedition made by F. Seiner from Katima Mulilo to Libebe, in Kruger 1984: 9-10.

⁷⁰ In Kruger, 1984, p. 17.

⁷¹ In Kruger 1984: p. 14.

Lewanika had renounced his authority over Caprivi and its people. In expressing his thanks, Chief Mamili is said to have muttered: '... At long last they [his people] could settle down'.⁷²

Unlike Seiner, Streitwolf did not believe the Marotse posed a danger to the new German riparian state on the Zambezi. He wrote in a report: 'They are not a fighting people and would scarcely risk a rising, which could, of course, be directed against the Chartered Company only. In such a case, we would be left in peace as the Marotse would scarcely be so foolish as to attack two powers simultaneously.'⁷³ Such an attack in Barotseland, Streitwolf reasoned, had its advantages: 'A Marotse rising could only mean our gain, as it will drive thousands of natives across to us. Should the Marotse actually rise up, I should feel perfectly safe with the 16 Masubia and Matotela police constables who are now being drilled by me.'⁷⁴ Being the administrator over a depopulated area, which did not bring any income towards its administrative expenses, posed inevitable difficulties for Streitwolf. As an incentive to attract people to resettle in Caprivi he was unable to impose a Hut Tax (as was in place in British Territories). He contacted Mathibe, Chief of the Tawana of Mababe under whom a sizable number of Masubiya who had escaped from Caprivi were living, to persuade his new subjects to return to Caprivi.⁷⁵ Of course Mathibe did nothing of the sort since he was benefiting from the hut tax paid by the Subia. He was reported to have been very pleased with the Masubiya settling in his area as it meant 'an increase in the Hut Tax in the Batawana Reserve ...'⁷⁶

The history of chieftainships in the Caprivi was discussed in great detail in chapter two. It is enough to mention here that Streitwolf (Kambungu) appointed chiefs over two main groups: Chikamatondo (evidently as regent for Liswaninyana who was still young) for the Masubiya and Simataa (Mamili) for the Mafwe. For the Masubiya, Streitwolf did not 'give them a new administration'⁷⁷ but rather a foundation on which to build anew. Their chiefs, the ruling Liswani family, were almost all absent from the Caprivi Strip during 1909, having fled away from Lozi attack or at the approach of the arrival of the ma-Dostela. Streitwolf himself records his efforts to try and persuade Liswani (Chika), chief of the Masubiya in Bechuanaland, to go back to the Caprivi; he refused. This lays rest to claims by some scholars that the Masubiya chieftainship begins with Chikamatondo. At the passing away of Chikamatondo in 1945, the Masubiya chieftaincy reverted back to the Liswani dynasty.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Hannay to Panzera, 26 May 1909, File A3/16/1, NAZ.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Fisch, 1999: p. 82.

As regards the Mafwe Chieftainship, it was constructed under German rule and is disintegrating at the present time as illustrated by the break away and re-assertion of a district identity by the Mayeyi and baMashi. Noting that Seluka and Mwanota were living outside the borders of present day Caprivi, Streitwolf considered the idea of imposing Simataa Mamili over the Mafwe proper, the Matotela, Mayeyi, Mambukushu and Mbalangwe as suggested by Seiner and Rothe in 1905 and 1904 respectively. They collectively assumed a new identity, Bafwe-Bayeyi. This invented identity did not last long. As early as 1961 there were calls for its disintegration and again in 1972 when the label 'Bayeyi' was dropped and the ethnic alliance became known just as Mafwe. Today this alliance has generated two more chieftaincies, Mayeyi and Mayuni (Mashi). A contest in the form of who is the 'true Mafwe' has since emerged between the BaMashi (Mayuni) and the remaining elements of the ethnic alliance.



Figure 3: Colonial perceptions of people and identities: 'Tjivona's people (Mafue)' as seen by the German colonial officer Streitwolf in 1909

An outstanding achievement for Kambungu was the return of Masubiya cattle driven across the Zambezi River by the Barotse shortly before his arrival. Two claims for the return of cattle on behalf of the Masubiya were lodged. The first was by Chief Mathibe of the Tawana in Ngamiland. He sought and was given permission to travel through German territory to Sesheke to see Letia. He arrived with 70 men, 50 of them armed, to plead on behalf of the Masubiya for the return of their cattle. It seems Chief Mathibe represented those Masubiya who moved into Bechuanaland upon the news of the approach of the Germans. According

to Streitwolf, Letia's answer was that people who abandoned their chief forfeited their possessions and Mathibe departed without achieving his purpose. Streitwolf went ahead to claim the cattle on behalf of the Masubiya. Even though the case came to be known as the 'Masubiya Cattle Case', there were claimants from the Mafwe side as well. Chief Mamili's subjects who claimed cattle included headman Mutumuswana of Kanono, Musisanyani Simataa I, Mufale, Matende, Batubadja, Mulawato and Salupeto. The delegation of Chief Chikamatondo consisted of Munihang, Muhatalizwi, Silumbu, Likando, Munimahela, Joba Muhulumwe, and others. The first hearing was on 9 February 1909, the second on 16 February. Letia initially claimed that all the cattle belonged to his father, King Lewanika, and were simply lent to Subia chiefs to graze and enjoy the dairy produce on behalf of the chief. As both Streitwolf and British officials refuted this, Letia was forced to modify his statement maintaining that he confiscated the cattle as an incentive for the people of Caprivi to come over to him.⁷⁸ The verdict ruled that 291 of the 486 disputed cattle should be returned.⁷⁹ Only one person, according to Fisch, was unhappy with the outcome of the cattle trial, Chief Simataa Mamili.⁸⁰ According to Fisch, although Chief Mamili lost about 100 cattle, only forty were recovered, largely due to the cowardice of his *Ngambela* Mutumuswana who dared not open his mouth because he was terrified of Letia. When Streitwolf reminded the chief of this, apparently he replied: 'It is all not that serious, the number of cattle will increase again'.⁸¹ Another reason the chief was hesitant to send more witnesses was that he knew Letia would not give him back the cattle. Consider the following words from Letia:

I do not have a case with Mamili besides eight [8] people from Linyanti who bought the cattle and the rest are Lewanika's cattle. Mamili is our man whom we appointed there to represent the Lozi State in Itenge. 'You Mamili had no right to be on the Masubiya side because you have no case against the Lozi as you are a Lozi and the cattle you are now claiming were given to you by Lewanika as a Lozi subject and as a Lozi representative in Itenge.'⁸²

Kruger supports this: 'Simataa [or Imataa as the Malozi called him] had been selected by the Malozi regime for the important position he was given by reason of good deeds in one or other campaign. It is said that the cattle he had accumulated, which were taken away by the Malozi when the Germans came, had come from a herd of 10 given to him when he was sent to assume his post at Linyanti in recognition of those services.'

⁷⁸ Willis to Wallace, 17 April 1909, File A3/16/1, NAZ; BS2/185 Vol. 2: Masubiya Cattle Case 1907 - 1909, pp. 45-49, NAZ.

⁷⁹ Willis, *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Fisch, 1999: p. 102.

⁸¹ Streitwolf 1911: p. 218.

⁸² BS 2/185, Vol. 2, NAZ.

The remainder of the period of German administration of the Caprivi Strip was mainly uneventful. Kruger summarizes: 'After Streitwolf had laid a good part of the foundation for the orderly administration not much time was left for others to build on it in any particular direction'.⁸³ Streitwolf was followed by Lieutenant Hans Kaufmann (the locals called him Samukosi - one with a thick neck) who served in 1910 as Acting Resident and again from 1913-1914. Samukosi (Kaufmann) was followed by Lieutenant Viktor von Frankenberg, who was known to the locals as 'Mutatosi' - one who has a strutting walk, also known as 'Sankonko'. Von Frankenberg served from 1911 to 1913 producing several excellent maps of Caprivi during this period. He returned to the Caprivi on 4 June 1914, only to be removed from office on 21 September by Allied forces. German colonial administration of the Caprivi Strip is best summarized by Trollope, '[the] Administration, largely indirect ... did not leave any mark on the strip - it was featureless and consisted mainly of preserving the status quo'.⁸⁴ It was a *laissez faire* sort of administration. The only reminder left, apart from the Caprivi itself, of the German period is a small building of burnt brick with a corrugated iron roof at Schuckmannsburg believed to have been the armory from the German days. German colonial administration of the Caprivi is generally remembered by the older generation in the Caprivi as being good, even though there were reports of fairly severe physical punishment to attain discipline.

The end of German rule in the Caprivi Strip as a result of the outbreak of WWI is quite telling from an administrative perspective. It became the first Allied occupation of enemy territory and Germany's first loss in the war while the rest of GSWA was still occupied. A Southern Rhodesian force of the BSAP gathered at Sesheke, occupied Schuckmannsburg and formally took control of the Caprivi Strip. A full account of the occupation of Schuckmannsburg by a BSAP contingent is provided by Lieutenant Stephens of the BSAP, 'With No. 1 Mobile Troop B.S.A.P. to Schuckmannsburg'.⁸⁵

The BSAP column which occupied the Caprivi Strip commanded by Major Capel, D.S.O was formed at Palm Groove siding in Southern Rhodesia. It consisted of No. 1 Troop from Salisbury under Lieutenant Stephens, which was mobilized on 8 August 1914. They congregated in Salisbury on 10 August and then began a two-day train journey to Victoria Falls. Other troops consisted of No. 4 Troop from Bulawayo under Lieutenant Parsons as well as a machine gun section from the Depot under Lieutenant Tribe and 40 armed Native Police. On 26 August No. 1 Troop was ordered to proceed to Kazungula to erect a fort, which they

⁸³ Kruger, 1984, p. 24.

⁸⁴ Trollope, 'The Eastern Caprivi Zipfel', in *The Northern Rhodesia Journal*, Vol. 3 [1956-1958], pp. 107-118.

⁸⁵ In the *Rhodesia Defence Force Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3, January 1915, p.2.

completed on 13 September. The column then proceeded to Sesheke in Northern Rhodesia, opposite the German town of Schuckmannsburg, via Livingstone where it was joined by a garrison from Kazungula to arrive at Sesheke on 21 September 1914. Lieutenant Stephens, locally known as 'Sirupula' or 'Chirupula', was immediately sent across to ask the Germans to surrender to avoid bloodshed. Sirupula, accompanied by Corporal Vaughan and Native Corporal Kapambue, met Sankonko (Herr von Frankenberg), the German Resident, and after prolonged discussion it was agreed that the camp would be handed over without resistance. The German Resident surrendered to Major Capel on 21 September 1914. The next day the troops were assembled in the square for the raising of the Union Jack. Sankonko (Frankenberg) and his European sergeant, Fischer, were sent to Livingstone. The Native Guards were held captive for several days and made to dig trenches as the British anticipated trouble from the west. They were released when Letia intervened on their behalf.

A Transferable Identity: The Caprivi 1914-1939

The following period was characterized by the neglect of administrative responsibility. The Caprivi changed hands four times during this period, from the South West Africa Administration (SWAA) to the Bechuanaland Protectorate (1921-1929), back to SWAA (1929-1939), and then to the South African Department of Native Affairs (1939-1980). A second and related administrative event was the parcelling of the territory into two; the great divide that separated the West and East Caprivi. West Caprivi was controlled by a police post at Andara and administered from Maun during the Bechuanaland period and from Rundu when control was vested in SWAA. East Caprivi was controlled by a police unit at Schuckmannsburg and administered from Kazungula (later Kasane) during the Bechuanaland period and from Schuckmannsburg, later Katima Mulilo, during the SWAA period.

Military Rule, 1915-1921

The Union forces that invaded GSWA during World War I had sailed back to Cape Town by August 1915. A military government was effective in SWA from 9 July 1915 and had a Chief Civil Secretary, Sir E.H.L. Gorges, acting as advisor on matters affecting the civil population. Shortly thereafter, in October 1915 the posts of Military Governor and Chief Civil Secretary were abolished and replaced by that of the Administrator, who took over the powers and functions of both. This remained the position during the war years. After the establishment of the League of Nations, the body which concluded that the people of South West Africa were not yet ready to govern themselves and that another power was needed to safeguard and promote their material, moral wellbeing and social progress and to lead them

on the path to self-determination. The Mandate System was born, and SWA was placed under the Union Government on behalf of the British. At a special session in September 1919, the Parliament of South Africa passed the Treaty of Peace and South West Africa Mandate Act, 1919 (Act 49 of 1919), to give effect to the Mandate. This was followed by another enactment, the Treaty of Peace Act (Act 32, 1921). In October 1920 a parliamentary commission was appointed to enquire and report on a suitable form of civil administration for SWA, which remained virtually under military rule until 1 January 1921.

Immediately after the removal of the German Resident from Caprivi, a submission was made by Mr. J.H. Venning, District Officer at Sesheke, 'The Newly Acquired Country Between the Zambezi and Mashi Rivers' in which he pleaded for the restoration of Barotse Rule in Eastern Caprivi, concluding:

Although it may be unwise to allow the powers of the Marotsi to spread beyond its present limits, yet Lewanika has undoubtedly claim to the strongest consideration in the ultimate settlement of the Strip. The Caprivi Strip, at least a portion of it between the Mashi and Zambezi Rivers, could be administered in the same way as other districts in Northern Rhodesia outside the Barotsi Reserve, and the people of this country could then freely enjoy their former privileges of grazing, fishing, reed-cutting and ploughing, without interfering with rights of the present occupiers of the land.⁸⁶

Venning went into great detail to show how the people of Caprivi Strip were just 'serfs' of the Lozi and how their claims to sovereignty and independent dynastic rule before Lozi subjugation were just a figment of their imagination. This is not surprising for he was serving the interests of his people - the Barotse. Unfortunately Venning's exposition, regardless of its context, has been quoted by several scholars over time as proof that there were no chieftainships in the Caprivi prior to the arrival of the Lozi (see chapter two). It is not known under whose instruction Venning's submission was prepared. A copy of it was handed over to the SWAA by the Chief Secretary of Northern Rhodesia when discussions for the so-called Barotse privileges were underway. Whether the case was presented by Northern Rhodesia or not, is not known. Venning went to the extent of summoning the people of the Caprivi Strip to explain the change in administration and assuring them they should not fear the Barotse, perhaps preparing them for an eventual Barotse occupation.

Venning's attempt was stopped in its tracks by the designation of Captain Eason, Magistrate at Kazungula (Bechuanaland Protectorate), as the authority responsible for the control of the Caprivi. It has been difficult to establish why the British, acting on the advice of the High Commissioner, decided on this arrangement. It is possible that the decision not

⁸⁶ J.H. Venning, [undated] p. 8.

to transfer the Caprivi Strip to Northern Rhodesia was a result of South African pressure. While there is no evidence to suggest that the people of the Caprivi were formally consulted, one might agree with Kruger's conclusion:

But the magistrate at Kazungula, whose seat was close to the Masubia in the east and who had a good number of those people in his own district, with fairly free movement both ways across the border [Mr. Venning himself reported that many of the people had cleared across to Bechuanaland], would have been well aware of Masubia sentiment respecting the talk about joining or rejoining Barotseland. That sentiment would have been firmly against, just as there would have been strong opposition from the tribesmen westwards, however kindly disposed the Malozi may have declared themselves to be.⁸⁷

Kruger concluded, 'The Masubia themselves, if not the other inhabitants of the Caprivi, may well have made it their business to present a petition of sorts through the Magistrate at Kazungula.'⁸⁸ Captain H.V. Eason assumed his duties as Special Commissioner for the Caprivi east of the Mashi River on 20 November 1914 at Schuckmannsburg, retaining Kazungula as his headquarters since he had the northern district of Bechuanaland under his charge. A non-commissioned officer of the Protectorate Police, the first being Corporal (later Sergeant) Legge (mentioned above), was posted to Schuckmannsburg and was instructed to report regularly to the Special Commissioner at Kazungula as well as to the Rhodesian Authorities at Sesheke on any matters that affected them. Therefore a kind of dual, albeit unofficial, reporting structure existed at the time. The names of the Special Commissioners who served the Eastern Caprivi during the period of military rule were, Captain H.V. Eason (1914-1915), Captain W. Surmon (1915-1916), Captain F. Garbutt (1917) and Captain H. Neale (1918-1920).

The administrative yardstick during this period was that while law and order was to be maintained, authority was not to be asserted to a greater extent than was absolutely essential and no revenue was to come from the inhabitants. Some decisions and tasks were undertaken and implemented during this period. On 28 January 1916 the Barotse in the surrounding Sesheke district were allowed access to the Caprivi for cultivation, fishing and reed-cutting for an initial period of one year beginning 1 July 1916.

Perhaps it is necessary here to clarify the concept of 'Barotse' as it applied to the people of the Sesheke district, by adding that even though the concept is usually employed as a blanket term, the majority were Masubia. The fact that Lewanika appointed his son Letia to govern over those people does not make them Barotse. Of course there were small numbers

⁸⁷ Kruger, 1984.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

of Barotse among them. It was thus difficult for the Masubia in the Caprivi to deny their kin across the river access to natural resources that they had shared since time immemorial. In 1918 permission was granted with the blessing of Chief Chikamatondo to the Zambezi Transport Syndicate to open a store at Kabulabula in the Masubia area. On 20 April 1920 the High Commissioner gave permission to the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church to build a mission school at Ikaba, as it was believed to be the principal village in Chief Chikamatondo's area. The school was established and a 'native teacher' appointed. He was supervised by a European named G. Wilmore whom the Mission had sent to Caprivi and who had his headquarters at Kalimbeza near Lifumbela's village. The average attendance at the school was 40 and each learner was required to contribute 6d (sixpence) a month.⁸⁹ This was the first school to be established by the SDA Church and, indeed, the first western style school in the Caprivi. A population census was conducted in 1921, showing 2003 males and 2246 females, a total of 4,249 people. It is not known whether this number includes children and, since no other census was carried during this period, this figure is repeated in successive annual reports.



Figure 4: The arrival of colonial representatives and modern means of transportation

⁸⁹ Kangumu, B, & Likando, G, *Mission Education and Health Provision in the Eastern Caprivi Strip During the Colonial Times, c1920-1964*, p.6 [Namibia Scientific Society, Forthcoming].

Under the Bechuanaland Administration, 1921-1929

When the Union Government became the Mandatory Authority over SWA it decided that the arrangement by which the Bechuanaland Protectorate administered the Caprivi was reasonable and should continue. The only addition was that the Bechuanaland Protectorate now acted as the agent of the Union Government with due regard to the terms and spirit of the Mandate. The formal transfer of the administration of the Caprivi Strip to the Bechuanaland Protectorate was expedited by two legal instruments, the Governor-General's Proclamation 12 of 1922 and the High Commissioner's Enactment 23 of 1922. According to these proclamations, the laws of the Bechuanaland Protectorate were made applicable to the Caprivi Strip from 1 January 1921. However, the pattern of administration applied in the period 1914-21 continued and was not affected by the new responsibilities introduced by the Mandate. The people were left to their own devices and permitted to live in peace and quiet, which was seen as creating a distinction between the new administration and the unforgiving hand of the old rulers, the Lozi. A number of traders were permitted to engage in activities in the Caprivi (as described above). These were M. Michelson (1921), J.A. Legge (1921), R.F. Sutherland (1926) and Harrington (1927).

As regards education, the number of schools run by the SDAs was increasing. Whereas there were only three schools in 1925 at Ikaba, Katima Mulilo and Linyanti, two new schools were added in 1926, one at Nsundwa and another at Lusesse.⁹⁰ These were known as bush schools, constructed using temporary materials such as thatch and reeds. The continued existence of these schools from year to year was not always secure as communities moved from time to time due to floods, as occurred in 1925. During April, May and June of that year, large tracts of the eastern flood plains inhabited by the Masubia were flooded to a greater extent than had been the case for 20 years. A report by the Administration of 1926 describes this flood:

... flood waters reached the highest level within the memory of the oldest inhabitants ... In large tracts of the eastern portion of the Strip there was hardly a village which escaped being swamped and, in some cases, the inhabitants had to build their huts with the floors raised 3 or 4 feet above the ground level in order to escape the water.⁹¹

By 1928 the number of schools in the Caprivi had increased to 14, with the one at Katima Mulilo, where the headquarters of the SDA were now situated being the most important. The 1928 Annual Report reflects a grant of £46 made to a school at Kasika. This was the first and the only school in the eastern Caprivi Strip that was under the management of the

⁹⁰ Kangumu & Likando, *Mission Education*, p. 6.

⁹¹ In Kruger 1984.

London Missionary Society (LMS). Kruger believes the school could have been established long before 1928, probably in 1921. It did not survive long after 1928. The school was the only testimony within Caprivi of the efforts of the LMS through the work of Livingstone, Helmore and Price and their families to create a mission station with widespread Christian influence in the Kingdom of the Makololo.

The Annual Report of 22 December 1927 describes how Africans east of the Mashi River were flocking in steady streams to Livingstone to sell produce such as fowls and skins. Even though there was no taxation under German rule, free labour to the Administration was required. When people from the Bechuanaland Protectorate moved to the Strip they continued to pay Bechuanaland Protectorate Tax. The taxation of the people in the Eastern Caprivi during this time became an issue of control. In a letter dated 25 November 1927 addressed to the Government Secretary at Mafikeng, the Acting Resident/Magistrate of Kasane wrote: 'The taxation of Natives in the Caprivi Strip has become necessary only for the reason that the Basubia have each year become more indolent and their Headmen are having difficulty in collecting a crew of paddlers for Government work.'⁹² It appears that since people were being converted into participants in a cash economy (through the sale of produce at Livingstone), it was no longer possible to work for the Government without pay. What compounded the problem, the Acting Magistrate wrote, was that '...Nearly every Native...is the owner of cattle and a man in possession of 30 head is regarded as a person of moderate means'.⁹³

As to 'native administration', affairs were regulated by Proclamation 1/1919 of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. According to this proclamation, the chief's *Kuta* (court) was the principal one and its judgments were final. Provision was made for appeals against the judgment of a chief, in the first instance, to a court composed of the Assistant Commissioner or Magistrate of the District and of the Chief. In the event that they disagreed, the Resident Commissioner would make a final decision. There was no evidence found to suggest that matters dealt with in the chief's courts in the Caprivi went to appeal during the period under review. Administration was generally limited to sending a police patrol once a year to the posts, which were established at Schuckmannsburg, Katima Mulilo, Sambala (presumably Singalamwe), Bwabwata (West Caprivi), and west of the Okavango River, at Andara and Mbambi.

During this time the Caprivi territorial identity included parts of present day Kavango, east of the Okavango River. The work of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration was highly regarded by the inhabitants Eastern Caprivi Strip. Confronting Trollope on his

⁹² Kruger, 1984.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

inspection tour in 1937, one inhabitant told him, 'Then the Bechuanaland government took us over and gave us many things including arms, ammunition, stores, schools and the sale of our cattle ...'⁹⁴ A full assessment of the impact of the Bechuanaland Protectorate administration on the eastern Caprivi strip is to be found in the Trollope report:

The handing over of the administration of the Strip to the Bechuanaland authorities was regrettable, though probably unavoidable at the time. During that period the natives enjoyed all the privileges of natives in Bechuanaland, privileges which we did not and could not continue. Stores sprung up and their profitable continuance was ensured by their possession of arms and ammunition licenses and by the fact that the natives were able to sell their cattle. Schools were started by missionary enterprise ... So that the local natives when they start comparing their conditions, do not compare them with those of South West African natives (in comparison with whom they are well off), but with those in Barotseland of which they are really a part, or of Bechuanaland which they have experienced ...⁹⁵

It is clear from this that even the authorities at the time regarded the Caprivi as part of Barotseland and not South West Africa. It is not surprising, therefore, that the inhabitants of the Caprivi chose to compare their situation with Barotseland and Bechuanaland, because they were administered as part of those territories. This aided the formation of a separate Caprivian identity.

Appended to SWAA: The Caprivi Strip 1929-1939

Union Proclamation No. 196 of 1929, which transferred the control of the Caprivi Strip back to the SWAA, expressed the 'expediency' of the move at that time. There was in fact nothing 'expedient' or that changed in the position of the territory, either geographically or in its remoteness to the rest of SWA. The reasons for taking back the Caprivi Strip are stated in the *East London Daily Dispatch* of 28 August 1929:

Another explanation, however, is that the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations only recently discovered that the Strip, with its few hundreds of Bushman inhabitants, is being administered by the wrong authorities. The Union Government, which was entrusted with the mandate over South West Africa, has, in the opinion of the Commission, evaded its full responsibility by offloading onto Bechuanaland the Caprivi *Zipfel*, its swamp, its fever and its wandering Bushmen. ... The Commission has therefore ordered the Strip to be restored to South West Africa and placed under the direct charge of the Administrator of that Protectorate.

⁹⁴ Trollope, L.F.W., 'Inspection Report', 1937, p.20.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

Thus the perception of the Caprivi as remote and unhealthy continued. It was still inhabited by 'primitive savages' as can be gleaned from the above description, and not much in the way of change was in the pipeline. Consider the following from the same news report, 'The only result will be the stationing there of a couple of South West policemen who, if they do not die of fever, will have as much game-shooting as they care to indulge in, but little else to occupy their time'. Was this what happened?

The SWAA resumed responsibility for the Eastern Caprivi Strip on 1 September 1929. Now that the territory had been incorporated into SWA (Proclamation 196 of 1929), the laws of SWA were made applicable (Proclamation 26 of 1929). In practice nothing much changed. The Native Administration Proclamation (which followed the Union Native Administration Act of 1927) provided the means for regulating the administrative order, tribal organization, appointment and recognition of chiefs. The Administrator of South West Africa remained the upper authority and indigenous laws and customs were accepted as long as they were not repugnant to 'natural justice and morality'. The Criminal Procedure Law was to be followed, and magisterial jurisdiction was given to the Magistrate at Grootfontein, which was a necessary formality. The appointment of Brittz as a Special Justice of Peace was another formality. Higher jurisdiction lay with the High Court of SWA. The Arms and Ammunition Proclamation and the Game Laws were applicable.

The classification of the territory as outside the 'Police Zone' or 'Red Line' meant that it was officially a prohibited area where persons who did not belong there could only enter with a special permit issued by the Secretary for SWA and only if there was a good reason to enter. Ordinary police did not operate there, the policy having to rely on tribal authorities in a kind of 'Indirect Rule' system. People from adjacent territories were allowed to enter the area on friendly or family visits, entries being made subject to the issue of simple 'passes'.

The arrangement of the 'two Caprivis' from the days of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration was retained for purposes of local control. These were: Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, that part east of the Mashi River, and the Western Caprivi *Zipfel* west of the Mashi, including the area that lay west of the Okavango River upwards as far as Mbambi, (which by definition of the boundary in the 1890 Agreement formed part of the Anglo-German deal). A post was established at Andara to control the western area and a superintendent appointed to control the eastern portion. The above, while not conclusive, broadly covers the situation during this period where in ordinary administrative matters the submission of periodic reports and direct correspondence between the Superintendent and the Secretary for SWA sufficed.

Another administrative instrument, which became important during this time, as will be shown below, were the Inspection Tours by senior officials in Windhoek to outlying posts

such as Schuckmannsburg in the Eastern Caprivi. These, it will be argued, while necessary, were largely ineffective partly because they were infrequent. Annual Reports under prescribed headings were submitted for incorporation as 'appendices' in the overall report of the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations. In this way the Caprivi Strip was administered as an appendix or footnote to South West Africa between 1929 and 1939.

Before handing the Caprivi over, the Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration had impressed on the South West Africa Administration two important issues pertaining to the Caprivi Strip. In appointing a magistrate for the area, the South West Africa Administration should consider an experienced person bearing in mind the troubles that resulted from ineffective German occupation, and the importance of the Strip due to its isolation and geographical position adjoining no less than four separate governments (including Portuguese Angola).

The other issue concerned veterinary supervision in the Strip and the danger of lung sickness arising from cattle movements from both SWA and from Angola. The SWAA immediately responded to the second issue by stating that they would not provide either a veterinary officer or a stock inspector. The position of the SWAA was that the quarantine of cattle and control of lung sickness was maintained principally in the interests of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Keeping the strip free of stock diseases was important to the Ngamiland cattle trade. All cattle from Angola, Maun, Tsau, Toteng and Mohembo arrived at Kazungula (some having passed through the Strip) and were inspected by the government veterinary officer (GVO) before being taken by barge into Northern Rhodesia for use as meat on the copper mines. After these crossings, the GVO of the Protectorate would then trek into the Strip making a crossing at Mahundu and travel as far as Mohembo to examine all the cattle in the Strip. The cattle found to be infected were immediately destroyed as were those suspected of having illegally crossed from West Caprivi. This was a quarantine area into or out of which the movement of cattle was strictly prohibited under penalty of their immediate destruction without compensation. In this way the introduction of cattle diseases from outside was suppressed. The SWAA's interpretation of this issue (as only being in the interest of the Bechuanaland Protectorate) was misplaced and unfortunate, for report after report mentions the lack of a market for the disposal of surplus cattle from the Strip because of a lack of veterinary control.

The Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration, recognizing that from their viewpoint the issue of veterinary control was the most important aspect of the change of administration, offered to allow its veterinary officer stationed at Kazungula to pay two annual visits, and such further visits as might be necessary to the Strip to inspect cattle. The SWAA was asked to pay his travelling expenses. This suggestion was accepted and Mr. Webb, then GVO

at Kazungula, paid visits to the Strip in 1930 and 1932, the year in which his services were terminated. Mr. Webb agreed that one of his right-hand men should go to the Caprivi to assist the new administration, particularly in matters related to stock control and the employment of local tribesmen in the service. That person was Songeya (Songiya) Longone Chaka, briefly described in 1929 as follows:

Chaka, 6'5, about 55 years of age, had, after an adventurous career, settled in the Strip some years ago. A Zulu of the royal house, he was alleged to have fled on the murder of his father and was a man whom the Bechuanaland authorities considered could be implicitly trusted and would be suitable for posting on the Mashi River with a Native Constable under him.⁹⁶

The advice to appoint an experienced magistrate in the Caprivi Strip was ignored. Instead, Mr. W.S. Chadwick was appointed. His qualifications are not known apart from the fact that he was a Native Affairs official and a writer of big game hunting stories. Judging from the afore-mentioned article in the *East London Daily Dispatch* on hunting, he had the 'right credentials' for the Caprivi. It appears that his appointment was temporary. He was sent there before the handover, probably to ascertain the situation on the ground before the handover. He took up his position, only to be withdrawn or resign. He was replaced by E.P. Brittz of the SWA Police, whom the locals called 'Namatama' (one with big cheeks) Brittz was assisted for a short time by Constable Blignaut. Sergeant Wright was placed in charge in the west. The instructions given to Namatama (Britz) were to control the movement of stock, to prohibit hunting especially of species classified as 'royal game' (elephant, giraffe, rhino and hippo), to enforce restrictions on the sale and supply of arms and ammunition and to control the issue of trading licences and the hire of government land. He was, however, cautioned not to interfere with the authority of the chiefs and their customs more than was absolutely necessary.

One of the very first tasks Namatama (Britz) accomplished in 1931 was the registration of firearms. This was necessary mainly for two reasons, firstly to determine the extent to which the people were armed as a control measure in case of an uprising and, secondly, for observing the Game Laws. It was only those with registered firearms who were allowed to buy ammunition and even then, only from the superintendent. This was in addition to restrictions on killing royal game. The following table indicates the number and make of firearms in the Caprivi in 1931, of course with the provision that this excluded those who did not care to register their firearms:⁹⁷

⁹⁶ In Kruger 1984.

⁹⁷ Kruger: 1984, p.7.

Rifle	Masubia	Mafwe	Totals
Martini/Henry	71	22	93
Lee-Netfords or Lee-Enfield	28	3	31
Muzzle-loaders	38	208	246
Shotguns	47	2	49
Other	5	2	7
Total	189	237	426

Table 4: Table showing number of firearms owned by tribesmen in Eastern Caprivi in 1931

The above ethnic classification was used at the time, therefore the Mafwe column includes those firearms owned by Mayeyi, Mbukushu, Totela, Mbalangwe and other groups then embedded in that broad category. It is notable from the above diagram that a greater proportion of what might be regarded as the more modern firearms of the time were in the hands of the Masubia living in the east, whereas the Mafwe and associated people in the west had mostly muzzle-loaders, tower-muskets of American manufacture. A possible explanation was that most of the arms, especially those owned by the Masubia, were acquired during the Bechuanaland period, during which time an ex-Sergeant Legge had a licence to deal in arms and ammunition on Impalila Island. The records are silent on how these firearms of American origin were acquired in surprisingly high numbers, considering that it was only in 1909 that Streitwolf (Kambungu or Katara matunga) reported that 'these natives are practically unarmed', or Seiner's report (1905) that only 'five chiefs are in possession of firearms'. Could it be that some of these firearms were relics left by traders and hunters?

The significance of the variations in the type of firearm owned by each ethnic group suggests the period of acquisition. The Mafwe had a large number of muzzle-loaders suggestive of an earlier period of purchase, while the Subiya had more .303s and shotguns indicating later acquisition during the Bechuanaland administration period, suggesting Subiya access to trade routes at this time.

The demand for the strict observance of the (no) hunting regulations imposed in the Caprivi Strip was a continuous source of discord between the administration and the inhabitants,⁹⁸ particularly since in neighbouring territories these regulations were not imposed. On the one hand, the inhabitants felt that they were being deprived of a source of

⁹⁸ It was one of the reasons for the removal of Chief Simataa Mamili from his throne apparently because he hunted without permission from the authorities. At the Odendaal Commission public hearings the people complained that the government was more interested in preserving wild animals than it was in their welfare and demanded that it withdraw from eastern Caprivi.

livelihood as well as income, since skins and hides fetched good money in Northern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland. Whereas the authorities restricted the amount of ammunition sold per annum as a control measure, this did not deter the inhabitants who turned instead to the widespread use of snares as a way of catching animals. The chiefs were not happy with this, even though provision was made for them to shoot two hippos for the pot per annum. The problem was partly compounded by the fact that officials, especially from the Union, hunted for sport in the Caprivi and were not subject to these restrictions.⁹⁹ Although elephants and hippos were regarded as pests destroying people's gardens, they were not allowed to be killed. The inhabitants accused the administration of caring more about protecting the lives of wild animals than about the people over whom they governed (see below).

Two related incidents between Namatama (Brittz) and Chief Simataa Mamili of the Bafwe (Bayei) should be mentioned here. On 15 March 1937 Chief Simataa Mamili defied procedure (perhaps he might have lost patience with Namatama) and wrote directly to the Secretary for SWA requesting that a larger amount of ammunition be allowed as well as permission to shoot elephants when they destroyed gardens. The response from Windhoek which was sent to the superintendent was that the matter was receiving attention and that Chief Mamili should be told to desist from writing directly to Windhoek but should always follow the correct channels i.e. through the superintendent. It is not known whether Namatama forwarded this response to the chief. In a letter to Namatama (Brittz), dated 9 May 1937, the chief writes:

I am very sorry for the letter I received from the Secretary for SWA. You prevented it to come to me. Why? I want you to send it here so that I can hear how they did write to me...P.S. If you will not send it here I am going to write to Secretary SWA Windhoek again.¹⁰⁰

Another incident, which occurred immediately following the above, pertained to the permit to kill only two hippos per annum. On 5 April 1937 Chief Simataa Mamili wrote to the Superintendent intimating that he had shot one hippo and asked for a pass to take the hide to Sesheke (Northern Rhodesia) to sell. The pass was duly given. Subsequently Brittz (Namatama) received information that Chief Mamili had taken more than one hide to Sesheke. On 23 April 1937 the Superintendent wrote to the Chief asking him to state how many hippos he had shot and noting that the matter was very serious. Initially no reply was received upon which the Superintendent dispatched a reminder. To this an evasive reply was given and on 5 May 1937 the Superintendent wrote again pointing that his question had not been answered and instructed Chief Mamili to come to Katima Mulilo for interroga-

⁹⁹ Kruger [1984: 10] reports of a ministerial party accorded hunting facilities by Pretoria that went to excess, even unto the shooting of a giraffe, classified as royal game, during this period.

¹⁰⁰ Trollope 1937, p. 10.

tion. The Chief answered back on 9 May 1937, demanding: 'if you have heard that I am a thief you must also tell me...I also need not to be worried by the case which I do not know.' When the Superintendent persisted in instructing the Chief to come to Katima Mulilo and pointed out that his question had still not been answered, the Chief replied that he would come the next week to talk about it. He never came to Katima Mulilo nor did he inform the Superintendent how many hippos he had killed. What became of Chief Mamili (his removal from the throne and subsequent banishment) is discussed in chapter four.

The above incidents should, however, not be interpreted merely as a disregard of authority but rather indicative of a deep-seated resentment and defiance of colonial rule. It was a way, limited as it might have been, of showing that the Chief and indeed his people, did not approve of the policies under which they were governed. They perceived these policies as discriminatory and intended to impoverish them further. They could not sell their excess cattle for there was no market and they tilled the fields only for elephants and hippos to destroy them.

Chief Simataa Mamili was not the first to show his displeasure with the administration in the Eastern Caprivi. Chief Chikamatondo had earlier written a letter on behalf of the Masubia to the Chief Native Commissioner for SWA in Windhoek requesting the removal of Superintendent Brittz (Namatama) from the Caprivi. According to a response from the Chief Native Commissioner addressed to Chief Chikamatondo (dated 18 May 1938), the Masubia accused Brittz, among others, of lowering the selling price of mealies from 10/- to 3/- per bag, of keeping them in the dark as to what was happening to the tax money being collected from them since there was no improvement in schools and no provision for shops and lastly, that Brittz had threatened them with what had happened to Chief Ipumbu could also happen to them if they opposed the administration.¹⁰¹

Chief Chikamatondo and his people suggested that the Northern Rhodesian system of leaving an officer in charge of an area for a short time only was the better course.

It took a long time for the Masubia to get a response because the Administration in Windhoek was finalising plans for the Additional Native Commissioner for SWA to undertake an inspection tour of the Caprivi Strip in 1937. One of the purposes of his tour was to investigate the Masubia complaints, which he duly reported on in his 1938 Report. Even though this official reported that the Masubia were '... undoubtedly ... antagonistic towards Sergeant Brittz ...', and recognized the administration's weaknesses, he advised against fulfilling the demand for Namatama (Britz)'s transfer, maintaining: 'I am, therefore, quite unable to support the request for Sgt. Britz's transfer. To do so now, even on other grounds

¹⁰¹ Chief Ipumbu ya Tshilongo of Uukwambi had been removed from office and deported from his home in 1932 (see Chapter Seven).

than those advanced by the natives, would be creating a most undesirable precedent as such action would undoubtedly be misinterpreted as a pandering to their desires.’¹⁰² So Namatama was not transferred, despite all the complaints, lest the people conclude that the administration was weak if it listened and responded to their demands.

Taxation was introduced into the Caprivi Strip in 1930 (Government Notice 160/1930) for the first time by written law. Each male between the ages of 18 and 65 years was required to pay 5/- per annum as a contribution to the Tribal Trust Fund, the accumulated funds to be used for the benefit of the respective tribes (Bafwe-Bayei and Masubia). Although it may appear that this was the first tribal levy, this was not the case. Such a limited definition of a tribal levy does not take cognizance of the fact that tribal law provided and had always required tribesmen to contribute to the needs of the chief and the *Kuta* (court) by means of service, produce from the fields, or meat and skins from a hunt. The introduction of a tribal levy by the Administration was successful because it was more or less modelled along the lines of the existing traditional tribal levy structure in the Caprivi Strip. The same arrangement applied during the German and Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration in the Caprivi where no taxes were collected, although the inhabitants were expected to render services to government and work at no cost, whenever required to do so. Examples of such service include communities providing paddlers for the barge and guides from one village to the next whenever the Superintendent was travelling, or the clearing and widening of roads from one village to the next. This is contrary to what was happening in neighbouring territories at the time where inhabitants were required to pay a hut tax. The money obtained in this way was used to pay for services provided to the administration.

Even with the introduction of the modern tribal levy, the inhabitants did not consider this as an exemption from the traditional levy. They were still expected to participate (and did) in doing work at the tribal headquarters and continued to provide food, which was not an amount expected to be unduly burdensome. Because of the depression, the two tribes were exempted from payment of the levy in the years 1933 (Government Notice 128/1933), 1934 (Government Notice 78/1934), 1937 (Government Notice 180/1937) and 1938 (Government Notice 185/1938). Commenting on the 1936 tax collections, Trollope was satisfied: ‘I checked these (Trust Fund Stamps)...[the] cash collections for last year [vide Annual Report] shows an average payment of 34% of the total population, a very satisfactory position [Ovamboland percentage 5%, excluding corn payments].’¹⁰³

¹⁰² Trollope 1937: p. 15.

¹⁰³ Trollope, 1938: p. 6.

Police patrols inspected receipts for defaulters who were dealt with summarily by being ordered to work on works of public importance such as aerodromes or roads when and where necessary. The introduction of taxation should be viewed as a form of administrative control. The two chiefs each received annual allowances of £20 from the Tribal Funds in the form of a salary. This reduced them to being government employees. As for the general inhabitants, it put them at the mercy of being forced into rendering free service to government as they could not afford to pay the required annual amount. It also put them at the mercy of being abused by Tax Collectors who were administration employees. The 'Native Tax Collectors' usually took cattle to the value several times the cash amount of the tax. They then took the cattle to the stores, sold them and pocketed the balance. In most instances villagers feared retribution and never reported this to the authorities thus leaving tax collectors who overcharged go unpunished.

Schools remained under the SDA Mission. Tuition was based on the Barotseland system, and Northern Rhodesia allowed their Inspector of Schools for Barotseland to oversee the Caprivi schools. The mission was unable to cope and a marked decline in the education system was recorded. Facilities such as classrooms were of a temporary nature and required constant repairs. Due to the absence of a government financial subsidy, the mission was unable to attract and retain suitably qualified teachers. There were no health facilities in the Strip at this time.

The dreaded lung sickness struck the Caprivi Strip in 1937. More than a thousand cattle were destroyed in an attempt to render the area non infectious. The remaining cattle were cordoned off and in due course were inoculated with serum obtained by air from Kabete in Kenya where it was reportedly developed.¹⁰⁴ This was an expensive exercise. The SWAA sent veterinarian Dr. Schmidt to take charge of the campaign under the guidance of Onderstepoort, the veterinary college in the Union and with the collaboration of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Veterinary Service. The campaign would not have succeeded were it not for the participation of the South African Air Force (SAAF). The Kabete vaccine had a short life span and this necessitated sending it by air at arranged intervals, firstly to Livingstone by scheduled air service, then by the SAAF to landing strips hastily prepared throughout the Caprivi Strip. According to Robert Nchindo, on the staff of Superintendent Brittz (Namatama) at the time, the landing strips made for the Air Force pilots carrying the vaccine were found, among other places, at Singalamwe, Lizauli, Sikanjabuka, Kalimbeza, Mwauluka, Kabbe and Kasenu.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Kruger 1984: p. 15.

¹⁰⁵ In Kruger, 1984, p. 15.

This would be an incomplete account of the colonial administration if no mention were made of those people from the Caprivi who served the administration during this time in various capacities, becoming the very first 'public service' in the territory. The following table was drawn up in 1937 by Trollope (p.4):

Rank	Name	Appointed	Emoluments
Native Constable	Songiya Chaka (Longone)	1.12.1929	\$75 p.a & \$5 uniform
N/Constable Labourer	Matali Miling ^a	1.5.1930	\$24 p.a & free uniform
do.	Robert Nchindo	1.2.1935	\$18 p.a do.
do.	Mumbone Mukendwa	1.12.1935	\$18 p.a do.
do.	Silumbu Manwel ^a	1.6.1937	\$18 p.a do
do.	Mubita Ntelamo	Probationer	\$18 p.a do.
Herdboy	Muyongo Mamil ⁱ	1.5.1936	15/-p/month (inclusive)

Table 5: Table showing the Caprivi public service employees in 1937

Others, such as Mubyana Simon Simalumba and Mubita Sakutiya followed. The unsatisfactory designation of Native Constable/Labourer given to these men was done to distinguish them from the Native Constables of the SWA Police. There was a difference, as Trollope found out, in the salary structure applied in the Caprivi Strip. In fact, the workers complained to him in regard to their pay. While Trollope conceded that 30s.0d per month (10s, 0d was *in lieu* of rations) plus free uniform was a fair wage, this was only so when compared with wages paid in the vicinity at the time. The Caprivi wages were, however, much lower than the wage paid to the majority of government 'boys' in Ovamboland. Once again, one sees the influence of neighbouring territories on events in the Caprivi. Administration of the Caprivi was more frequently dictated by events taking place in the neighbouring territories of Northern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland Protectorate than it was by greater SWA.

The administrative centre shifted from Schuckmannsburg to Katima Mulilo during this time. Sergeant Brittz (Namatama) reported the date of the opening of the 'New Station Katima Mulilo as 28 January 1935.' The centre was less than 4 miles from the famous Katima Mulilo Rapids, which featured prominently in the 1880s to 1890s during the determinations of the Anglo-German Treaty. The actual spot is easily identified by the prominent Baobab tree, known as Nakabunze to the Masubia, who assert it to have been the residence

for a time of one of their early chiefs.¹⁰⁶ According to tradition, the name Katima Mulilo¹⁰⁷ (the name translates as 'tima mulilo or quench the fire') was used long before to describe the experiences of canoe men who had to 'shoot' the fast-flowing rapids. At low water especially a particular channel towards the left bank had to be negotiated on the route down. This channel contained a particularly dangerous rock onto which canoes were swept by the powerful waters unless expert care was taken. The unwary would capsize on impact and the firebrand they always carried from spot to spot to light their fire when they went ashore (no matches were available), was extinguished.

The starting point for a fair assessment of the administration of the eastern Caprivi Strip between 1929 and 1939 should be the inspection reports. Inspection tours became an important administrative tool during this period. How many visits actually occurred? What information do the reports resulting from inspection tours provide?

Surprisingly, the most critical voice regarding the poor administrative setup in the Caprivi Strip is to be found in two inspection reports, one by Trollope (1938), the other, by Eric Louw (1939). It is not surprising that both reports come at the end of the period under review. At the time of his tour of the Caprivi Strip in 1937, Leslie French Trollope was the South West Africa Administration's Additional Native Commissioner for the northern territories, including the Caprivi. His report should be viewed from this perspective. He begins his criticism by endorsing Sergeant Brittz (Namatama) and the inhabitants' request for more frequent visits by senior officials to the area. During the period of South African rule up until the outbreak of World War Two in 1939 only two inspection visits took place. The first was by Major du Preez in 1929, shortly before the South West Africa Administration took control of the Strip., although Mr. H.P. Smit paid a fleeting visit to Schuckmannsburg (three hours only) in 1931. The second and last visit was the 1937 visit by Trollope. This meant that there was a gap of nine years without any official of significant standing visiting the Caprivi. It is from the report on this visit that I am quoting. Two sets of criticisms can be gleaned from the reports, one set levelled against the Administration, and the other, against Sgt. Brittz. With regard to the Administration, Trollope concluded:¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* p. 17.

¹⁰⁷ In a letter dated 14 April 1930, from the District Commissioner of Sesheke to the Secretary for Native Affairs at Livingstone, stated that 'Katima Mulilo' referred only to a small side stream between an island named Lusibi and the Northern Rhodesia bank, that the Rapids should properly have been named 'Muchilansimba', meaning the tail of the Sipa Cat (Genet). He claims to have been given that information by Induna (Headman) Mukengami, who occasionally visited the Caprivi from his nearby Northern Rhodesian village and was later killed by a buffalo.

¹⁰⁸ Trollope, 1938, p. 3.

To the natives themselves the Government at Windhoek is a very nebulous abstraction. Our administration in the Strip is largely a negative one - the orders are mainly to what is 'verboten' and surveillance to see that those orders are observed. The natives gradually come to the conclusion that these restrictions are all Sgt. Brittz's own responsibility with the result that he is placed in a very invidious position which more frequent visits of senior officials would help to alleviate.

He continued:

When we took over control from Bechuanaland most of the stores closed down [none were left in 1937], in pursuance of our policy of game preservation ... we restricted the amount of ammunition that the natives could buy and forbade the purchase of any fresh firearms. An indirect result of our assumption of control was the immediate collapse of the market for cattle. These had previously been sold through Bechuanaland but this avenue was closed to us as we had no veterinary control. So that actually our Administration cannot appear in too favourable a light to the natives. The blunt fact is that our control of this small territory, remote from SWA to which it is connected by a 20-mile wide elongated strip of desert, and almost completely surrounded as it is by other administrations, is wholly artificial. It is politically anomalous, economically unsound and administratively well-nigh impracticable.¹⁰⁹

Trollope made two suggestions to remedy the situation. The first was that besides more frequent visits, say once every two years, to the Strip, he recommended that three or four 'natives' should pay a visit every other year to pay their respects to the Administrator and Chief Native Commissioner at Windhoek. Such 'natives' could proceed at no expense as far as Kachikau in Bechuanaland and then board a lorry proceeding to Gobabis. The cost would consist of the lorry fares, train from Gobabis, and a small subsistence allowance of 1s.0d per day, all met from the Trust Funds. The idea was an excellent one because it could have exposed the inhabitants of the territory to what was happening in greater SWA. It is not difficult to guess why it was never implemented. Its principle was anyway misplaced, for it was ridiculous to suggest that people travel all the way from the Caprivi Strip only to pay respects to an 'Administrator' of a Government which had taken so much away from them and was doing nothing to improve their lot. All this was to be at the visitor's expense from Trust Funds earmarked for developing the areas in the Caprivi. Perhaps his most sensible suggestion was:

Insofar as the Eastern Caprivi is concerned, to avoid the taunt of the Constitution Commission's criticism of our general native policy would necessitate a permanent minimum staff of an administrative official (Native or Assistant Native Commissioner), a veterinary officer (or stock inspector) and a doctor - and complementary native staff. All this for about 9,000 people. These services cannot be combined with other areas owing to the geographical position. The expenditure involved in administration would be irrecoverable directly or indirectly. The Strip is no labour source for us nor an outlet for our products.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p. 21.

At least this was one suggestion from Trollope that was implemented in part in August 1939, when the SWAA offloaded the Eastern Caprivi Strip onto the Union Department of Native Affairs. Kangumu (2000) argues that in fact it was not for geographical remoteness that the SWAA requested to be relieved of the administration of the Caprivi Strip, rather the failure to implement the above suggestions, the expense of the just completed (1937) inoculation campaign in the territory and, on the Union's part, the strategic importance of the Strip on the verge of the outbreak of World War II.¹¹⁰ In regard to Sgt. Brittz, Trollope made the following two observations. He stated that Brittz had as a strength the attribute of being a 'disciplinarian, a trifle insistent on rules and regulations' and was a man quick to show his displeasure to any one who forgot what is expected of him. While conceding that absolute firmness was essential, Trollope considered this again to be Sgt. Brittz's weak point. In a setting based on indirect rule, Trollope argued, a further quality was essential - the confidence of the chiefs and people. That certainly Sgt. Brittz did not possess, so he might have been looked at with respect as a representative of a distant Administration, and not as the people's counsellor and confidante.¹¹¹

The other inspection report which makes interesting reading was compiled by E.W. Louw, the Union's Chief Native Commissioner for Northern Areas. He undertook an inspection tour of the Eastern Caprivi in 1939, shortly before Pretoria took over control of the territory. Louw concurs with the above that the South West Africa Administration was encouraged to get rid 'of the incubus of the Caprivi by a growing anxiety over its neglect of its responsibilities for the welfare of its people to the League of Nations, to which body it is under obligation to report annually'.¹¹² He emphasizes that: 'Apart from the cost of administration ... and the cost for inoculation which it was obliged to pay in connection with outbreaks of lung-sickness, the South West African Administration has done next to nothing for the natives during the ten years it has administered the territory'.¹¹³ As to the administration of the territory between 1929 and 1939, Louw explains:

There is little doubt in my mind that the Administration was anxious not to incur any expense in the control of the territory and left the superintendent to rely on his own initiative to establish what measure of control he could (pp.16-17). It was evidently intended, as with the Instructions in 1932 on which control is based, to maintain a status quo. (pp.17-18). They [the measures] take no account of human development, and should now be expanded to meet the changing circumstances of the population (p.4).

¹¹⁰ 'Useful Bantustan'. Kangumu, B., 'Forgotten Corner of Namibia', (MA, UCT: 2000).

¹¹¹ Trollope, 1938, p.15.

¹¹² E.W. Louw, 1939:32.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* p. 31.

While appreciating Sgt. Brittz's work of ten years, which he achieved alone and single-handedly under difficult circumstances with practically no assistance from his headquarters in Windhoek, Louw is critical of the system of Administration:

Appreciation of his work need not, however, hide the obvious shortcomings of his system of administration and control. It is, in fact, a weak system. Its efficiency depends on two factors, firstly the man himself, and secondly, the fear of those ruled of his punishments. The danger to any administration which is based on the character of one outstanding individual lies in this that a breakdown in the administration immediately follows upon his removal at any time or through any cause. This is obvious. The people do not like the superintendent. He himself says candidly that it is so, so that his position becomes difficult as the people begin to find ways of obviating his orders without being discovered (p.17).

What needed to be done was the following:

What is now virtually a dictatorship will no longer meet the case and will need to be replaced by more up-to-date methods of administration, which will involve a greater cost than has hitherto been the case (p.19).

The next chapter will investigate the administrative changes that took place following Louw's report and Pretoria taking direct control of the territory.

4 Colonial Administrative Identity II: From Bantu Reserve to Bantustan, 1939-1982

A Bantu Reserve, 1939-1960

The question of the Union's Native Affairs Department taking control of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was first discussed in Cape Town by the Administrator of SWA and the then Prime Minister of the Union, General Hertzog. This was confirmed by a minute dated 4 March 1938 from the Administrator to the Prime Minister.¹ I have argued (see above) that the SWAA did not choose to off-load the financial burden of administering the ECZ onto the Union Native Affairs Department because of its geographical remoteness. The Acting Secretary for SWA, D.L. Smit, observed in 1938, 'the Caprivi strip is even more remote from the Union than from Windhoek'². The primary motivation for the change in administration was the inability to implement recommendations made by Trollope regarding the future control of the ECZ, which were deemed to be too expensive and unjustifiable for a small population.

Some saw this as an opportunity to bring an area of high strategic importance under direct Union control (this on the verge of World War II). This section will answer the question as to whether there was a transition in administrative systems after the Union took over control of the territory. The two officials who authored the critical reports discussed above were both closely involved in the affairs of the ECZ after the transfer, one as Native Commissioner/Magistrate and the other as the Chief Native Commissioner responsible for Northern Territories. What did they change *in lieu* of the dictatorship which they inherited from Namatama (Brittz) of the SWAA? My conclusion will be that few things did in fact change and that the area was administered as another South African 'Bantu Reserve', which happened to be situated in central Africa. My focus in this section will be on the provision of education and health services, which I argue, the administration passed on to missionaries. I begin by highlighting the negative perceptions of the land and its people that prevailed and the impact this had on the evolution of the colonial administrative identity.

¹ Letter from Acting Secretary for SWA to Secretary to the Prime Minister dated 11 May 1938.

² In a letter dated 22 June 1938 to Mr. Courtney-Clarke of the SWAA; see also Kangumu, 2000: 15, for an expansion of this argument.

Perceptions of Land and People

The perceptions of the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel, the land and its people over time, can be summarized as being those of swamps, fever and wandering Bushmen. On the one hand, the land was classified as fertile and rich in game, fruit and fish and therefore able to provide for every need of its inhabitants. It was spacious, for the few inhabitants could roam from one corner to the other in search of food or security in times of looming danger. Droughts and famines were unknown. However, the Europeans considered it a useless piece of land, for it did not have mineral resources such as diamonds and copper, nor, with its few inhabitants, was it a labour reservoir or even a significant market for products. While prospects for agriculture, especially cattle ranching, were good this was not encouraged. The area was classified as not only remote, but also unhealthy for European settlement. Unlike other territories where there was massive resettlement of whites, this was discouraged in the ECZ because malaria and black water were rife and this impacted on the selection of administrative officials. We find this entry about Sgt. Brittz in one letter, 'Sergt. Brittz has been there for nine years and has not contracted these diseases - which seems to indicate that he has a natural resistance thereto.'³

The ECZ administrative station was considered a difficult assignment. Officials to be posted to the ECZ were not considered unless they were married, had experience and could show resilience to disease, particularly malaria. It was this latter perception of the land as unhealthy which led to its declaration and subsequent administration as a Bantu Reserve, where the 'natives', it was presumed, would be happy to live under their own laws and customs and where 'detrribalization' could be kept to a minimum. This was tantamount to maintaining a *status quo* which in all respects was based on the construction of isolation and impoverishment as an administrative mechanism.

The perceptions become more negative when referring to the inhabitants of the ECZ. They are referred to throughout the colonial ethnographic and historical literature as 'Barotses' or, more recently, as of 'Lozi' origin. The result of this denial of multiple identities in the Caprivi led to an attitude of paternal benevolence, especially towards the Masubia, who were referred to as 'Lewanika's children'.⁴ The two reports that preceded the Union take over of control of the ECZ, were full of negative descriptions of the inhabitants and their mode of life. Such perceptions continued under the colonial officials serving in the region under the Union Administration. Trollope, the Magistrate for Caprivi wrote in his 1940 Annual Report:

³ From Trollope to the Chief Native Commissioner, dated 21 November 1938.

⁴ Letter from Trollope to Eldridge, District Commissioner of Sesheke, dated 30 July 1952.

The people are, with natural exceptions, neither prepossessing nor attractive. As far as money is concerned, they are very poor ... Except for the desire to adopt European clothing, and a very superficial desire for very superficial education, the Natives show no tendency to abandon their own customs. (p. 11)

In an earlier report (1938) Trollope concluded the following, 'Although we refer to the Strip as being inhabited by the Mafwe and Basubia, those tribes are not really very distinct nor have they any very real background of tradition. They were vassals and hangers-on of other tribes - mainly the Barotse - and have little actual tribal organization or authority ... They never have had, therefore, any real separate existence.' The same negative perception is repeated by Trollope's Assistant, Kruger, in his 1940 Report (pp. 11-12) after a tour of Mafwe areas, 'My opinion is that these people need very firm guidance. Until comparatively recently they were a subject tribe and consequently have no background. Their laws and customs are uncertain and I incline to the view that a written code of laws would be a good thing. They live in a land of plenty which state has, in their case, brought about a weak fibre.'

It is not surprising that Kruger reproduces his senior's negative perception. He admits to inadvertently using some of the conclusions expressed by Trollope in their conversations (p.12), so that what he writes should not be interpreted as what he observed during his tour, rather the 'official position' applied to local conditions. Further evidence of this attitude can be deduced from the Louw Report (1939). Louw was the Union's Chief Native Affairs Commissioner who was sent to the ECZ to accept the transfer of control. He was more concerned with the physical appearances of the inhabitants, which he used to distinguish the differences between Mafwe/Bayeyi and Basubia. He wrote:

The Masubia people appear to be more industrious and progressive of the two tribes. The men generally were clothed in dungaree shirts and loin cloths or khaki shorts. They appeared to be cleaner and more intelligent than the Mafwe. The Mafwe were dressed mostly in loincloths only, except for the thick coating of dust over their bodies which, judging by the particularly strong and overpowering odour they carry with them, must have been unrelieved of any acquaintance with water or other cleansing element over a considerable period. The physique of the men, more especially the Mafwe, was in many cases strikingly good and showing little signs of malnutrition. (p.8)

The above section serves to illustrate that the Union takeover was underpinned by negative perceptions of Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, its land and people. The administrative set up that followed was no doubt a product of such perceptions. In short, the colonial administrative identity during this time regarded the people as primitive and who should not be 'detribalized' because, although poor and living in an unhealthy place, were content with their 'Black man's diet'.

A Place of Natural Beauty: The ECZ Bantu Reserve

The transfer of control of the ECZ to the Union Department of Native Affairs received a fair share of attention from the international community. The transfer was viewed mainly as 'mysterious', with an influential Italian newspaper *Giornale d'Italia* of 2 August 1939 describing it as an annexation, while the *Rand Daily Mail* of the same date viewed it as illegal. *The Star* (2 August 1939) headlined its article 'Caprivi Strip mystery' arguing that the official explanation of the takeover as a matter of administrative expediency was not convincing but added that there was no satisfactory reason that could be envisaged at the time. The British attitude was that the issue was entirely a matter for the Union Government and that Britain, on whose behalf the Union was administering the Mandate, had not been informed of the planned transfer. The view expressed in Europe, however, was that Britain had a hand in the affair. *Giornale d'Italia* compared the transfer of the control of the ECZ to Pretoria to the 'heinous barter concluded by France to the disadvantage of Syria', all in the frame of the British Commonwealth. In Germany the transfer was seen as 'worse than the bartering away of the Sanjak of Alexandretta by France, which had also been done at the request of Great Britain'.⁵ For Germany the transfer represented a challenge to her colonial rights that had been stolen from her after World War I, and demanded their return.

Although the Permanent Mandates Commission was informed of the intended transfer in early 1939, their response was that, 'The administrative arrangement contemplated calls for no observation on its part provided all the provisions of the mandate are properly applied in the eastern portion of the Caprivi *Zipfel*'.⁶ In its 1939 Annual Report, the League of Nations expressed the hope that with the transfer 'the Government will be able to comply more fully with the terms of the Mandate by devoting more attention to the welfare of the Native population'.⁷ By Union Proclamation No. 147 of 1939 the Eastern Caprivi Strip was transferred⁸ to the Union Department of Native Affairs as of 1 August 1939. Following the

⁵ *Rand Daily Mail*, 2 August 1939.

⁶ Permanent Mandates Commission, Session XXXVI, pp. 280-281.

⁷ U.G. 30 - 1940, p. 175, in Pretorius 1975: 46.

⁸ With the transfer, the SWAA handed all files pertaining to the Eastern Caprivi Strip to the Union Native Affairs Department. The following files were handed over in 1939: A. 503/1 (Administration); A. 503/2 (Forests); A. 503/3 (Game); A. 503/4 (Reports); A.503/5 (Boundaries-I & II); A. 503/6 (Transport); A.503/7 (Trading); A.503/8 (Education); A.503/9 (Missions); A. 503/10 (Estimates); A.503/11 (Trust Funds); A. 503/12 (Lease of Crown Lands); A. 503/13 (Native Affairs); A. 503/14 (Buildings); A.503/15 (Prospecting); A. 503/16 (Health matters-general); A. 503/17 (Mining Law); A. 503/18 (Implements); A. 503/19 (Lions-destruction of); A. 503/20 (Permits to enter); A. 503/21 (Annual visit of leading Natives to Windhoek); A. 503/22 (Native Staff); A. 503/23 (Barotse Privileges); A. 503/24 (Return of Kaluwe E.F. Lewanika to Caprivi Zipfel); A. 215/3/20 (Stocktaking); A. 28/108 (Law Books); A. 470/18 (Stock diseases); A. 521/63 (Native Labor); A. 84/12/2 (Customs); A. 342/19 (Medical work); A. 413/8 (Drought); A. 326/21 (Malaria);

transfer, Proclamation 243 of 1939 constituted the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* as a magisterial district. By Government Notice 1607 of 1939 a Bantu Affairs Commissioner's Court was established. Government Notice No. 1210 of 1940 provided for the declaration of the territory as a Nature/Bantu Reserve. This meant that the disposition of land to non-inhabitants of the ECZ could take place only with the specific consent of the Union Parliament.

On 25 October 1939 Major Leslie French W. Trollope⁹ assumed duty as Magistrate and Native Commissioner with Mr. C.E. Kruger as his assistant in both capacities. Written instructions served as a basis for their administration: to foster the operation of 'native' institutions and to endeavour to improve them and make them an effective instrument of Government; to combat witchcraft; to control stock diseases; to preserve the indigenous fauna and to pay particular attention to the promotion of the material and moral wellbeing and the social progress of the inhabitants. These officials, in addition to the functions ordinarily required of Native Commissioners and Magistrates, became the heads of the police in the area; they also performed the functions of a district surgeon and veterinary officer. In short, they acted as the fathers of the people and were expected to look after their every need. Kruger describes the incorporation of tribal chiefs into the administrative system during this time¹⁰

The tribal set-up and its chieftainships were accepted and confirmed as the basis for local government and arrangement, interference with that order having been insignificant (except for elimination of features against natural justice or morality) and development taking a natural, even an accepted course, under local supervision, lightly applied, of one government officer.

Thus Pretoria's takeover changed nothing in regard to local government in the territory. The divide between the Mafwe (Bayeyi) under Chief Mamili and the Basubia under their chief, Chikamatondo, dating back to the German period, was adopted. Two issues are important here. Firstly, it is often remarked, as if this was an achievement, that the Mafwe constitutes within its ranks subordinate groups such as Mayeyi, Mbukushu, Totela and small bands of Barakwengo (San). The literature is silent on why the Germans decided to group these identities under the Mafwe, except to state that they were leaderless at the time and consented to be placed under Chief Mamili. The Masubia did not have a leader within Caprivi at this time. Instead of viewing this as a great German achievement, on the local level it

A. 460/23 (Native Chiefs and Headmen); A. 531/23 (Locusts); A. 502/37 (Movement of stock); A. 532/24 (Cash Accounts); A. 376/25 (Roads); A. 9/27 (Arms and ammunition). These files, kept mainly by the SA National Archives in Pretoria, were only returned to the National Archives of independent Namibia in 2005/2006 and can now be accessed from there. In the past one had to travel to Pretoria to access records concerning the Caprivi.

⁹ The Masubia nicknamed him 'Makabi Kuyenka' due to his manner of shaking his body.

¹⁰ Kruger, 1963, p. 4.

entailed a loss of identity, the consequences of which haunt the Caprivi today as forms of identity disintegration, which have led to verbal, physical and sometimes even fatal clashes. Secondly, the local administrative establishment survived because of the sustained division of the inhabitants of the Caprivi into Mafwe and Basubia, even though this was very much contested (see chapter six).

During a visit to the Caprivi in 1941 the Secretary of Native Affairs, Mr. D.L. Smit, decided to remunerate not only the chiefs, but also the *Ngambelas* (prime ministers) and the ordinary members of the *Kuta* (court) in order to make tribal institutions 'effective instruments' of administration. Before 1941 the chiefs alone received allowances (of £20 per annum), which came out of the tribal funds. By 1945, however, the allowances of the chiefs had increased to £30 per annum, those of the *Ngambelas* (prime ministers) to £18, while ordinary *Kuta* members received £12. In addition, *Kuta* secretaries were now paid from the Departmental vote instead of from tribal funds. Chiefs, *Ngambelas* and *Kuta* members were paid out of the same vote.

The administration of justice was tribally organized on the usual 'native' basis with village heads responsible for their small communities, larger disputes going to the district headman for settlement and, failing this, to the chief's *Kuta* (court), which offered a binding judgment. In such cases the Native Commissioner/Magistrate could be called upon to give assistance in the execution of the judgement. A provision for appeal was introduced into tribal law at this stage. A dissatisfied party could lodge an appeal before the Native Commissioner's Court that had powers to examine or hear such cases and confirm or overturn the chief's judgment. In rare instances parties chose to bypass their chiefs and take their dispute to the Magistrate who would summarily deal with it and therefore assume powers of a chief-in-council. The Native Commissioner/Magistrate had the powers to inspect at intervals the judgment records kept by each council and in the process, even without appeal, confirm the judgments or give instructions for any matter to be reopened or to be brought before him for a re-hearing. The following matters were brought to the Commissioner's Court in the first instance:

- Persons killed or who had died from unnatural causes, such as murder, drowning or fighting, or were killed by wild animals
- Serious assault cases
- Rape
- Witchcraft
- All cases in which parties belong to different tribes
- All cases between council members
- All cases involving the chief himself.

Immediately after taking control the Native Affairs Department improved the remuneration of the Native Constable-Labourers and appointed a number of cattle guards who were to keep a strict watch over the movement of cattle and guard against the introduction of stock from neighboring territories where lung sickness prevailed. The cattle guards kept stock registers. From 1942 their services were used for the registration of births and deaths among the population. Indeed, the guards were responsible for conducting the population census in the villages. The population census of the ECZ was first taken in 1921 and then yearly after that between 1930 and 1939, in 1941 and again in 1946. During the duration of World War II the census was not taken.

Steps were taken in 1941 to prevail upon the chiefs to pass tribal laws enforcing measures for the culling and castration of bull calves in order to improve stockbreeding. Interbreeding was discouraged and cattle guards were required to report on the availability for sale or lack of good bulls in the herds under their control so that these could be better distributed. It was not until 1945 that an official from Pretoria, Dr. H.H. Curson, then Deputy Director of Native Agriculture, visited the ECZ. He undertook a comprehensive survey of the agricultural conditions of the territory and made several recommendations. One of which was that a first grade agricultural officer should be stationed in the territory to give special attention to improvement of stock by selective breeding of 'native' cattle, as opposed to the practice of grading up through the introduction of other breeds.

The cornerstone of the policy of indirect rule applied in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* during this period relied on the presumption that the inhabitants should be left largely to their own devices, under a system that entailed slow evolutionary and natural processes in a territory reserved *in toto* for its inhabitants. In reality, local government at the time took the form of tribal structures presiding over the majority of the people who for the most part lived in rural areas. Apart from occasional trips to outlying areas and reports received from cattle guards, the Union control of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* can be reduced to the overseeing of an administrative post - Katima Mulilo. For this reason it is necessary to examine what was happening at the headquarters.

The administrative centre shifted from Schuckmannsburg to Katima Mulilo in 1935, as the former was too far to the east, was affected by annual flood inundation and was generally considered unhealthy. Expenditure of £1,100 was authorized for the building of a house, offices, a detention cell and outhouses. The station at Schuckmannsburg was demolished save for one stone building from the German period (still standing at present) and the bricks were transported by barge for the construction of Katima Mulilo. All the 1935 buildings were replaced in 1945 by specially designed residential and administrative buildings for the Government Headquarters at Katima Mulilo. These were a residency, courthouse, gaol and

outhouses, as well as the installation of a pumped water supply and a power driven maize mill. The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) camp was in the immediate neighbourhood of Katima Mulilo as was the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Mission. The mission was the only one in the area at the time. Missionary Owen, his wife and their two small children and one white person at WNLA were the only Europeans stationed at Katima Mulilo. The closest community of Europeans to Katima Mulilo was stationed at Sesheke in Northern Rhodesia, where the District Commissioner, the Stock Inspector, Paris Mission staff and a few traders lived.

In June 1940 both the Native Commissioner/Magistrate and his Assistant applied to be released for military service. The administration of Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was placed under the control of the Northern Rhodesian District Commissioner at Sesheke. However, defence authorities of both the Union and Northern Rhodesia raised objections to these proposals. Instead, a special company of 'native' soldiers was formed for service in the strip as part of the general military arrangement for the protection of the Victoria Falls Bridge. This Special Company is discussed in greater detail in chapter six. The Native Commissioner/Magistrate and his Assistant were appointed as Commanding Officer and Second-in-Command respectively. They were entrusted with the formation and training of the Unit in addition to their civil duties.

The Imperial War Graves Commission and the Caprivi

Three members of the Native Military Corps (No. 5836 Cpl Sihope Mbala; No. 5815 Pte. Luniso Silongo; No. 5852 Pte. Machinga Simataa) lost their lives as a result of drowning on 6 April 1941. They were buried in the grounds of the Magistracy at Katima Mulilo. The Imperial War Graves Commission sent temporary wooden crosses, which were erected on the graves. However, because the area was termite-ridden, the wooden crosses disappeared within a short time. This raised the question of how the graves could be maintained in perpetuity and what alternative form of commemoration could be used to make sure that the graves did not become 'unmaintainable'. The IWGC decided that the 'native' graves at Katima Mulilo were to be obliterated along with others in certain areas described as 'inaccessible', thereby confirming the general characteristic of the Caprivi as being inaccessible or remote. As a form of commemoration, it was decided to erect an obelisk either at Serowe in British Bechuanaland, or at Tsumeb, SWA. Once again, the Caprivi, its people and its history, was to be appended and commemorated in far-flung areas. Objections to this were raised amongst others, by Mr. J.A. Smuts of Pretoria, previously Adjutant of the Special Company of N.M.C., Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, in correspondence to the IWGC, from which the following is extracted:

Major Trollope informs me that it is your intention to erect an obelisk either at Serowe, British Bechuanaland, or Tsumeb, SWA, and in this connection I would respectfully point out that neither of these places can be described as adjacent to Katima Mulilo and that members of the Masubia Tribe, to which these deceased soldiers belonged, never have occasion to visit either Tsumeb or Serowe. Furthermore, as you will well appreciate the deceased soldiers belonged to quite a different tribe to the Natives of Serowe or Tsumeb and to inscribe their names on an obelisk at these places would really serve no purpose at all.¹¹

It is not clear from the records whether the obelisks were erected at those places or anywhere else. What is known is that the graves have probably been obliterated at Katima Mulilo for the Magistracy of the time has been replaced by new buildings. That part of the Caprivi and its identities now exists only as an archival record.

Chief Simataa Mamili and the Administration

While the chiefs were the corner stone of administrative control during this period, the authorities were not hesitant to express displeasure and take steps against any chief who disobeyed orders. The misunderstanding between Chief Simataa Mamili of the Mafwe/Bayeyi and the administration started during the period of the SWAA, and is discussed in part above. The administration charged that Chief Simataa Mamili was ‘...an excessive drinker and endeavours to rule autocratically ignoring the advice of the elders of the tribe. [And that] His tribal organization and control are weak.’¹² However, the real concern was that Chief Mamili frequently violated the prohibition to kill what was classified as ‘royal game’ and refused to explain himself to the authorities when called to do so. The chief refused to come to Katima Mulilo to meet officials from Windhoek sent to enquire into such issues. In 1937, Trollope, then Additional Native Commissioner for SWAA, visited the Caprivi on an inspection tour and told Chief Simataa Mamili that his behaviour and administration of his tribe were unsatisfactory, unjust and ineffective but that he would be allowed to remain in the position for one year, at the end of which the Superintendent would report and if he was found to be unsatisfactory, he would be deposed.¹³ Chief Simataa Mamili ‘proved an unsatisfactory chief and was deposed by the South West Africa Administration in 1938.’¹⁴ He was

¹¹ Letter from J.A. Smuts of P.O. Box 1311, Pretoria to the Officer I/C War Records, Graves Registration and Inquiries, IWGC, dated 3 January 1948.

¹² Trollope, 1938, p. 9. It is also alleged that due to his unsatisfactory behaviour, he fled to Bechuanaland to escape his father’s anger, remaining there until when he was called to replace him. Apparently he had fled from the Strip as he had been caught by his father interfering with one of his (father’s) younger wives (Trollope, 1940: 14).

¹³ Trollope, 1938, p.12.

¹⁴ Trollope, 1940, p. 14.

removed to Katima Mulilo where he lived under the supervision of the Superintendent. In 1939, however, and at the request of the Mafwe people, the Chief Native Commissioner, Mr. Eric W. Louw, reinstated the chief 'as an act of grace' to coincide with the Union takeover of the Strip.

In 1944, Chief Simataa Mamili was convicted again and fined for killing royal game. This raised the whole question of unsatisfactory conduct over the years and lack of co-operation. Chief Chikamatondo of the Masubia was told by Superintendent Brittz that what had happened to Chief Ipumbu (banishment from his territory) would now be applied to Chief Simataa Mamili, making him the first person to face banishment under colonial rule in the Caprivi Strip. A Removal Order (reproduced below in part) signed by Piet van der Byl, the Minister of Native Affairs, dismissed Chief Simataa Mamili from his Chieftainship and forced him to move to a new village outside the Mafwe tribal area:

Removal Order: To Simataa Mamili, Chief of the Mafue (Bayeyi) Tribe, Eastern Caprivi Zipfel Area.

Whereas I deem it expedient in the public interest that you should be removed from the Chieftainship of the Mafue (Bayeyi) Tribe in that you are addicted to the excessive use of intoxicating liquor, that you have been convicted of contravening section four of the Game Preservation Ordinance of South West Africa, 1927, (Ordinance No. 5 of 1927), and that you are incompetent.

Now therefore, ... I hereby order that you be forthwith removed from your position as Chief of the Mafue (Bayeyi) Tribe and that within thirty days from the date of service of this order you remove yourself and your family from Linyanti Village in the Mafue Tribal Area ... to the Masubia Tribal Area ... under Chief Chikamatondo, there to reside at Kalundu under the supervision and control of Headman Kamwi Folesi on a site to be pointed out by the said Headman Kamwi Folesi.

And I further order you not to leave Kalundu without the written permission of the Secretary for Native Affairs, Pretoria, first had and obtained.

Given under my hand at Pretoria this Seventeenth Day of July, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Forty-Four.

(Signed) Piet van der Byl, Minister of Native Affairs, Union of South Africa.¹⁵

Chief Simataa Mamili did not relocate to Kalundu village as ordered but made representations to the administration to be allowed to settle at Kalengwe in another part of the Masubiya Tribal Area. This was expressed in a communication dated 25 October 1944 from the Magistrate Eastern Caprivi Strip to the Secretary for Native Affairs:¹⁶

¹⁵ Removal Order, Signed by Piet van der Byl, Minister of Native Affairs of the Union, dated 17 July 1944, NAN: A. 871, Box 2, File 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

To the Secretary for Native Affairs

Re: Mafue Tribe: Ex-chief Simataa Mamili

Your letter of 18 July 1944 refers; The Minister's notice was served on Simataa Mamili on 12 August 1944 in the presence of the members of his *kuta*. Simataa expressed thankfulness at being relieved of his duties but stated that Kalundu would be an unsuitable place for him to live; I told him that if he could tell me where he desired to live, provided it was outside the Mafue Tribal Area, I would recommend his request to you; By 12 September 1944 Simataa had not done so and had not, indeed, carried out the Minister's order; He has now however, removed from the Mafue Tribal Area and has made application to live at Kalengwe under Headman Muraliswani in the Masubia Tribal Area and I recommend that his request be granted; He has not yet transferred his belongings to his new residence but I am making arrangements for that to be done. Signed L. Trollope, Magistrate Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*.

Ex-chief Simataa Mamili was allowed to return to the Mafue (Bayeyi) Tribal Area thanks to a permit signed by the Secretary for Native Affairs at Cape Town on 3 September 1953, but only after signing a document embodying strict provisions. Regardless of the circumstances under which Chief Simataa Mamili was removed from the Chieftainship, this case shows dissent, resistance and defiance of colonial orders. It relates much about state-society relations in colonial Caprivi, an area which needs further enquiry.

While this book is certainly not a study of cultures of resistance in the Caprivi, it is important to emphasize that an important aspect of regional nationalism in the Caprivi embedded in tribal politics and the forerunner of such regional nationalism, is the human-wildlife conflict. This is drawn out clearly in the public hearings of the Odendaal Commission (see chapter seven), where inhabitants accused the Administration of caring more for animals than humans. People were not allowed to hunt. The buying of arms and ammunition was highly controlled in an area where there was no outlet for the disposal or sale of excess cattle and no stores.

In short, the area was impoverished and its economy one of subsistence. The only abundance was in game, fish, and fruit. While people practiced subsistence agriculture, their crops were often destroyed without compensation by the same elephants and hippos that were protected by the colonial administration. These were the pests, which they were not allowed to kill. This was a sore point in state-society relations. With the shift from tribal to political (nationalist) representatives, this issue formed a strong basis for the desire to overthrow the 'white man's rule'.

Education and Health

The discussion of the Union control of the Eastern Caprivi Strip showed that the administration continued much along the same lines as Sergeant Brittz (Namatama) had established

and developed, that is, tribal authority under the supervision of one government officer and an assistant. An increased number of visits by senior Department officials took place during this period. The provision of services especially education and health facilities was, just as was the case with the control of the Strip, 'off-loaded'. In this case these services became the burden of the missions.

Mission education¹⁷ in the Caprivi Strip developed under the SDA Mission during the Bechuanaland period from one school in 1921 with an average attendance of 40, to 14 schools in 1928, with the Katima Mulilo school having an average attendance of 107. The tuition at out-schools (or 'bush schools') which served as feeders to Katima Mulilo went up to Standard II (Grade Four today), and at Katima Mulilo tuition was given up to Standard IV (Grade Six today). From Katima Mulilo learners could proceed to Lower Middle School at Rusangu in Northern Rhodesia, and from there they could go to Solusi Training School in Southern Rhodesia. The curriculum used by the SDA was laid down by the Northern Rhodesian Native Education Department and an official from that department inspected the schools. Only one school received assistance from the Administration. During the SWAA period an allowance of £50 per annum was paid to the Mission. This was withdrawn by the Union at the time of the transfer of Administration. The village in which the school was situated was required to contribute £3 per annum communally to Mission funds. When a village headman requested that a school in his village be established, he was required to donate 90 bags of grain annually or £4.10s.0d to the Mission. This excluded payments made in respect of books and other school necessities. From 1944 onwards these expenses were met with assistance from the tribal funds. A critical assessment of the SDA education project is found in Trollope (1940: 18-19):

The mission has a history of some fifteen years in the Strip but it is gradually retrogressing. The number of out-schools has decreased year by year. Considering the time the Mission has operated in the area the results are extremely poor ... On paper the syllabus and educational schemes are impressive but in fact the position is the reverse ... The Native teachers are on the whole poorly educated and not of a high standard otherwise. Last year three out of eight of them were dismissed for misconduct. The salaries paid are insufficient to attract any better material. The schools themselves are shabby and inadequate. School furnishings are poor. There is a dearth of text books. Vocational teaching is, despite pretence to the contrary, non-existent.

¹⁷ For a detailed history of education in the Caprivi see Kangumu, B, and Likando, 'Mission Education'.

The SDA educational project was eventually ended in 1943. The above negative assessment is a reflection of the Administration's failure to provide education to the people of the Caprivi Strip. The official position was that education was of little use to the Strip Natives: 'The educated natives will have to look beyond their borders for employment'.¹⁸ It is surprising that even though the demand for education was real, officials described this as '... a very superficial desire for a very superficial education'.¹⁹ The Administration was hardly in a position to criticize the SDA Mission since it was doing nothing itself.

The withdrawal of the SDA forced many learners to attend school either in Northern Rhodesia or Bechuanaland. Learners from the Caprivi Strip on the north bank of the Zambezi River went to school at Sichili or at the Paris Mission School at Sesheke. The Roman Catholics – the Capuchin Order, accepted the Administration's invitation and moved across the river into East Caprivi in July 1945 from Sichili in Northern Rhodesia, even though their headquarters were at Victoria Falls. The Catholics, who occupied the site vacated by the SDA, greatly improved education in the Eastern Caprivi Strip, so much so that by 1959 there were 15 schools under their management subsidized by the Government with a total of 884 learners of whom about 165 were in boarding hostels at the Katima Mulilo main school. The curriculum used and the examinations written remained those of the Northern Rhodesian Education Department, which continued to inspect the schools.

There were no medical services in the Eastern Caprivi Strip before the Union took over administrative control. It should be recalled that one element of the construction of 'The Caprivi' was that the area was an unhealthy place in which malaria, dysentery, scabies, goitre, tropical ulcers, sleeping sickness, leprosy and mental illness were all prevalent. The Administration's instruction to the officials to prohibit and eradicate witchcraft should be viewed in this light. People turned to witchdoctors in the absence of medical services. As Trollope wrote in 1940 (p.25): '... the only way to entirely supplant witchcraft is, not prohibition, but substitution. And by substitution I mean substitution by instruments which will perform the variety of functions of the supplanted witch-doctors i.e. religious teaching, doctors and an efficient and enlightened system of administration of justice.' It is difficult to appreciate how the Administration could endeavor to abolish witchcraft while at the same time working to maintain and foster the operation of 'native institutions'. This was quite a contradiction since witchcraft was closely interwoven with tribal organization. In any event, Trollope discovered no excesses of witchcraft in the territory.²⁰

¹⁸ Trollope, 1938.

¹⁹ Trollope, 1940, p.11.

²⁰ Trollope, 1940, p. 25.



Figure 5: A school inspector travelling by canoe in eastern Caprivi, 1960s

Despite the necessity for a medical doctor, the Administration thought it adequate to supply the Magistrate with a quantity of drugs to treat those inhabitants who reported at headquarters with various ailments. The arrival in 1940 of the Special Company of Military Corps, including a South African Medical Corps Orderly, provided the basis for the introduction of medical services in the Eastern Caprivi Strip. The Corps established a clinic at Katima Mulilo where all minor ailments were treated. Serious cases were sent either to the Sesheke Mission Hospital or to Livingstone Hospital (both in Northern Rhodesia); the cost was met by an annual stipend to that hospital.

When the Special Company was disbanded in September 1943, Joshua Ilukena and Nathan Mwanga, from the Caprivi who, as members of the Special Company had had useful training in the army clinic, inherited a wide range of medical supplies and carried on the service of the Administration as Medical Orderlies. Severe cases of leprosy and mental illnesses were taken to the Union and iodized salt was distributed to arrest the local cause of goitre, which was troublesome in certain villages between Katima Mulilo and the Mashi River. The clinic at Katima Mulilo was replaced by the opening of a hospital in 1948 by the Roman

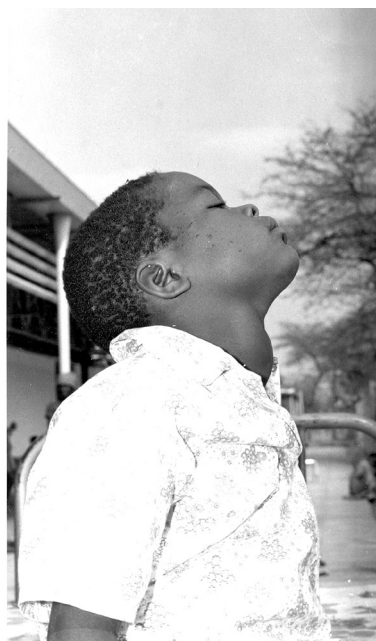


Figure 6: A child with Goitre, one of the local diseases

Catholic Mission. The hospital consisted of over 100 beds, and offered the services of a resident doctor, matron and qualified sisters (nurses).

The discussion on the provision of education and health in the Eastern Caprivi Strip has revealed that the Caprivian identities had been shaped in this regard by the close contact with adjacent territories. People went to schools and hospitals in Northern Rhodesia. As explained above the curriculum used, examinations written and school inspectors were those of Northern Rhodesia. In brief, as far as services were concerned, these were made the responsibility of the missions that depended on their headquarters in adjacent territories. During this period it is not an exaggeration to conclude that the Caprivi and the identities that were created in this area were shaped more by Northern Rhodesia than the Union Government.

Northern Rhodesians and even people from Bechuanaland, however, crossed into the Eastern Caprivi Strip for education or health services at certain times. This was typical of border identities. When a school ceased to exist on the north bank of the Zambezi (Northern Rhodesia), learners could simply cross to the south bank (Caprivi Strip) for schooling. If medical services were closer across the river, people would attend there. Thus one finds interesting 'labels' or 'identities' entering the education vocabulary in colonial Caprivi during this period produced by this interaction among identities. The most common are 'alien learner', 'alien teacher' and 'alien Natives as opposed to Strip Natives', as well as the term 'WNLA parents'. In a letter addressed to the Magistrate of the Eastern Caprivi Strip, dated 3 March 1955, the Secretary for Native Affairs enquired:

- How it came about that the children of Northern Rhodesia Natives attended schools in the Caprivi Strip?
- How many Northern Rhodesia Natives (with or without children) are residing in the Strip and for what purpose?
- What is meant by the term W.N.L.A. parents?

The 'labels' such as alien learners, alien natives and W.N.L.A. learners and parents described outsiders, not Caprivians thus giving these groups an exclusive identity. Even though all were 'natives', administratively, a distinction existed between 'Strip Natives' or 'Caprivians

today' and those from outside. While there was constant interaction, fusion was strictly controlled. The concept 'alien' applied to citizens especially of Northern Rhodesia who attended school or took up employment in the Eastern Caprivi Strip. While figures for the period before 1944 are not available, records show a steady increase of 'alien learners' from 1944 onwards, as shown below:²¹

Year	Number of Alien Learners
1944	1
1945	5
1951/2	24
1954	71
TOTAL	101

Table 6: Diagram showing the number of those classified as 'alien learners' in Caprivi schools

'Alien' learners in the Strip increased radically as the last school on the Northern Rhodesian side closed. The tuition now received at the Caprivi School was superior to that of other Northern Rhodesian schools further afield. Perhaps the most important factor was that a large percentage of the labour force in and around Katima Mulilo at the time was composed of the so-called 'alien natives'. Since no 'Strip Natives' were qualified as teachers, Northern Rhodesians were appointed to teach. In 1955, for example, there were nine 'Strip' teachers as compared to twenty one 'alien' teachers from Northern Rhodesia employed by the Roman Catholic Mission at the main school and 13 out-schools.²² The 'alien natives' working in the Eastern Caprivi in 1955 numbering one hundred and twenty seven are broken down into the following categories:²³

Origin	Number
Northern Rhodesians	114
Nyasa (Malawi)	5
Angolans	4
Bechuanas	4

Table 7: Diagram showing number and nationalities of those classified as 'alien natives' employed in Caprivi

²¹ Figures Extracted from a Letter from the Magistrate, Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, addressed to the Secretary for Native Affairs, dated 15 March 1955.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

The 'alien natives' were employed by the WNLA, the Mission and trading stores as Store Capitaos (Head Boys), teachers, clerks, drivers, hospital orderlies, lorry 'boys', builder 'boys', capitaos for rest camps, on the pontoon, labour gangs at the compound and as domestic servants. The concept of 'boys' is used here not without sensitivity to its derogatory nature but simply to accurately reflect the labels used during the period under discussion. The number of outsiders employed in the Eastern Caprivi Strip was relatively high considering the fact that the Administration regarded education as being of no use to the inhabitants of the territory. The Magistrate at the time, Colenbrander, justified this as follows:

Among the employees there are 'Strip' natives, but very few in proportions. It may not be realized but the natives of the Strip have just begun to 'develop' and are still very primitive, indeed, very few make good servants and none remain at work for any length of time.²⁴

This shows that the Administration of the Union had failed to transform the Eastern Caprivi Strip and its inhabitants, at least to the standard obtained in adjacent territories. Educationally, they were still backward, and indeed described as, 'still left behind'.

'Primitiveness', however, should not be taken as the reason why 'Strip Natives' did not remain at work for any length of time. Perceptions of 'work' differed. Most of the inhabitants of the Caprivi at this time regarded work outside their subsistence living as 'piece-work' or temporary chores, undertaken mainly to supplement what they produced in their fields. That is what they defined as real work. The urge to 'work' outside traditional settings was regarded as a pastime in contrast to their subsistence lifestyle, which was able to provide for their needs.

Barotse Privileges, Muntunjobuswa²⁵ and the Caprivian Identities

A Northern Rhodesian Native Commissioner fondly known as 'Hippo' Francis became a joke when on a station bordering on the Belgian Congo he once sent in an annual report headed 'Foreign Affairs' to the effect that his relations with foreign powers continued to be friendly.²⁶ This applies to the annual reports on the administration of the Eastern Caprivi Strip, so much so that one gets a feeling that a dichotomous administrative arrangement existed, namely tribal organization for internal affairs (indirect rule) on the one hand and Union officials being afforded adequate time to concentrate on 'foreign affairs', on the other. Officials endeavoured to be on friendly terms with neighbouring territories and this continued to be an 'achievement' resonating in every single annual report. This was necessary

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ A Subia word, literally meaning, 'Only a person can be ruled'.

²⁶ *The Northern Rhodesia Journal*, Vol. 3 (1956-1958), pp. 107-118.

for two reasons. The first is that geographically the Eastern Caprivi Strip was more closely linked to Northern Rhodesia and the Bechuanaland Protectorate than to South West Africa. The Strip was hinged on all sides by other administrations and as the Caprivi had no machinery to keep its administration in step with that of South West Africa, it was bound to develop along different lines. This made the Administration vulnerable on two grounds, namely the disputes over hunting grounds and the fact that it was a target for agitators, and most importantly, a butt for external criticism in the United Nations General Assembly in regard to the Mandated Territory of South West Africa. Neighbouring territories were quick to highlight even small differences in an area not enjoying the same attention as other native areas in the Union. Officials were thus naturally inclined to keep in step with what was happening in those territories.

The second reason was the vested interests of neighbouring territories in the Caprivi Strip due to its geographical position. Lying along the three main rivers of the central portion of southern Africa, the Caprivi had always exerted an influence quite out of proportion to its size on its neighbours. Grandiose schemes were proposed during this period. One of which was the use of the rivers as waterways, schemes for generating electric power or irrigation on a large scale, which ultimately would make lower 'riparian owners' feel the influence of the Caprivi. Another was the proposed construction of a transcontinental railway to the West Coast. A further area eliciting interest was the native policy practiced in the Caprivi and the impact this would have on the scheme for the incorporation of Bechuanaland and lastly, the strategic and tactical value of the Caprivi Strip in times of war. In the words of Professor Patricia Hayes: 'Caprivi [was] a kind of threshold or holding space against the rest of Africa.'²⁷

For Northern Rhodesia, one such vested interest was the so-called 'ancient rights' for the Lozi, which became part of the Caprivi and were administered as 'privileges'. Even after the advent of colonial rule, Northern Rhodesia continued to occupy a part of the Eastern Caprivi Strip five miles wide bordering on the Zambezi from the Katima Mulilo rapids to the point of confluence of the Zambezi and Machili Rivers, about 60 miles in length. This area was known as the 'privileged area'. Barotses were allowed to fish, cut grass and reeds, build huts and cultivate gardens there. The privilege was originally granted for one year and was renewed annually; it gradually became restricted to Sesheke 'natives'. As stated above, the privileges were granted on the basis that from 'ancient times' the Barotse enjoyed such rights in the Caprivi Strip. The 'ancient rights' of the Barotse/Lozi in the Eastern Caprivi

²⁷ Made as part of an External Examiner's Report: Bennett Kangumu Kangumu. 'A Forgotten Corner of Namibia: Aspects of the History of the Caprivi Strip, c.1939-1980'. (MA, UCT, 2000). Patricia Hayes is Professor of History at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

were challenged in chapter two. I have argued here that in fact the Barotse did not have any 'ancient rights'; these were vested in the people subjugated by them.

Successive colonial administrators in the Eastern Caprivi Strip continued to grant such privileges not on the grounds of anything other than the need to maintain cordial relations with Northern Rhodesia. This was important because people from the Eastern Caprivi Strip depended on Northern Rhodesia as a market to sell the fish needed in large quantities for feeding workers on the copper mines, the grain at Sesheke and to seek work in Livingstone. These were all activities that could be prevented by Northern Rhodesia. Even though officials knew that 'the balance was strongly in favor of the Barotses' (they benefited more), not much could be done. I would argue that concessions such as the 'Barotse' privileges were overtures to keep Northern Rhodesia 'happy'.

If 'ancient rights' claim was an accepted yardstick used to parcel away portions of the Eastern Caprivi Strip's territorial identity, then this was applied selectively, as the case of Muntunjobuswa indicates. In 1950 Chief Chika of the Basubiya (Bekuhane) of Bechuanaland filed a complaint against the Native Commissioner/Magistrate of the Eastern Caprivi Strip, Major Trollope. In 1944 Trollope arrested certain Bechuanaland 'natives' living on and cultivating Muntunjobuswa,²⁸ an island in the swampy Chobe River, brought them to Katima Mulilo and fined them. Apparently the Bechuana tribesmen were warned in 1930, 1940 and 1943 to stop cultivating and leave the island since it was not Protectorate territory. They used to return surreptitiously in subsequent years and cultivate the lands. The Chobe, the boundary that separated what was then Bechuanaland (Botswana) and Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* (Namibia), cuts through the area of the Masubiya tribe in the Katchikau-Mahundu area. Thus there are members of the tribe on both sides of the boundary. At the prosecution that ensued there was no defence and convictions followed guilty pleas.²⁹ For Trollope the whole issue rested on the question of whether Muntunjobuswa was in the Caprivi or in Bechuanaland territory.³⁰ In light of the 'Barotse privileges' this could certainly not be the major consideration. The question was whether there was any assertion of rights.

Chief Chika's complaint was itself an assertion of rights. The Bechuanaland people were prevented from fishing in Lake Lyambezi, a depression of the Chobe River in the southern part of the Eastern Caprivi Strip. A few of them were arrested and their fishing nets impounded by the officials of the Eastern Caprivi authorities. The reasons why Northern Rhodesian 'natives' were permitted to have privileges based on 'ancient rights', however flimsy,

²⁸ In Lake Lyambezi; at times the Masubiya referred to the whole lake as Muntunjobuswa.

²⁹ Letter from Trollope, Native Commissioner of the Eastern Caprivi Strip, to the District Commissioner, Kasane, Bechuanaland, dated 14 October 1950. NAN: LKM File No. N.1/15/3-9.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

while Bechuanaland ‘natives’ did not, are difficult to appreciate and point to the argument above. The Bechuanaland natives, being descendants of Masubiya who fled the Eastern Caprivi Strip due to Barotse subjugation, had an even stronger claim to ‘ancient rights’ than did the Barotse.

A South African Bantustan in Central Africa: The Caprivi Strip 1960–1980

The ‘winds of change’³¹ that swept across the African continent during the late 1950s and early 1960s did not bypass the Eastern Caprivi Strip. An accelerated quest for self-determination and independence was felt the world over. The UN demanded that South Africa deliver on its mandate to propel the inhabitants of the Mandated Territory of South West Africa towards full self-determination and produce evidence of the improved wellbeing and social progress of its inhabitants. In South West Africa, the late 1950s saw the formation of the Ovamboland People’s Organization, the forerunner to SWAPO, the 10 December 1959 Old Location Massacre and the formation of the SWANU.

In central Africa and territories adjacent to the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, namely Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Southern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland Protectorate, nationalist movements were unwavering in their demand for independence. At the International Court of Justice (ICJ), a case against SA in regard to the Mandated Territory of SWA was brought by Ethiopia and Liberia. In the Eastern Caprivi Strip the Caprivi African National Union (CANU), a nationalist movement under the leadership of Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye, had been formed in the late 1950s and was operating underground (see chapter seven). All these factors conspired to force SA to appoint a Commission of enquiry into SWA Affairs to avert the criticism that it was doing little to honour the provisions of the Mandate.

As a result fundamental changes occurred in the Eastern Caprivi Strip during this period. Firstly, the perception of uselessness gives way to usefulness, as can be observed from increased SADF involvement in the Caprivi. By 1976 Katima Mulilo housed a ‘sophisticated airbase in the underdeveloped backwater, Mpacha’³² (see chapter six) to counter the advance of ‘Black Africa’. Secondly, therefore, an administrative shift took place from neglect to intense focus. This resulted in increased state expenditure, the formation of a planning committee composed of high ranking Union Native Affairs Department officials to direct the

³¹ Harold Macmillan, former British Prime Minister.

³² Professor Patricia Hayes in conversation with the author.

course of project development and the Government takeover of schools, hospital and clinics. Thirdly, with the roadmap to 'self-government' proposed by the Odendaal Commission, 'Caprivians' moved from tribal to political representation, although this was characterized by intense local politicking along tribal lines. All these events during the course of a century should surely rank as a turning point in the history of the Eastern Caprivi Strip.

This shift witnessed the waning powers of the chiefs, the rise of the intellectuals (mainly teachers) and a clash between the two. All of which was fuelled by an Administration that believed it was protecting the 'duly constituted' authority (the chiefs) from being overtaken by young men 'of no consequence' (see chapter seven). The old order was being replaced by the new and Pretoria was forced to advance the pace of 'development'. This translated into an increase in local administrative staff and infrastructural extension, however, not necessarily into social progress where the people generally benefited. All this was prompted by events outside the Eastern Caprivi Strip.

The independence of Zambia had an immediate impact in the form of the severing of local ties and the end of 'friendly relations' that had previously characterized every annual report. The Administration could no longer keep its official bank account in Livingstone or continue to use Northern Rhodesian currency.

This section will briefly discuss the Odendaal Commission's recommendations as they relate to the establishment of the Eastern Caprivi Bantustan, the role of the Planning Committee as a relatively more progressive administrative force, the establishment of the Caprivi Legislative Assembly (1972), the Caprivi 'Constitution' and 'Government' (1976), the involvement of the 'Caprivians' in the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) sponsored Multi-Party Conference (MPC) and lastly, the Second-Tier 'Administration for Caprivians', considered here as the apex of the 'historical constructions' of the Caprivi Identity.

The Odendaal Recommendation for a Bantustan

South Africa became even more determined to implement her racial policies both in the Republic and in SWA after her 'independence' in 1961, amidst domestic and international pressure. The Odendaal Commission of Enquiry was appointed in 1962 to investigate the social, economic and political conditions in South West Africa and to make proposals 'to accelerate the black population's socio-economic development'.³³ The Commission's work and recommendations were premised on the policy of ethnic fragmentation, firmly believing that 'mixing [the] groups would adversely affect the climate for socioeconomic progress and

³³ Du Pisani 1986, p. 159.

ultimately lead to discontent and violence'.³⁴ For the Caprivi, as for others in South West Africa, the administrative system proposed by the Odendaal Commission was a legislative council with limited powers, composed of chiefs and elected representatives.³⁵ In the context of this chapter, Odendaal provided a roadmap for a Caprivian identity – a legislative assembly, a Caprivi Government with symbols of state (constitution, flag, coat of arms, national anthem), and finally the term 'Caprivians' was given prominence.

Chapter seven will discuss the public hearings conducted by the Odendaal Commission at Katima Mulilo over two days. Three general observations are important. Firstly, on the whole the commission interviewed more Europeans resident in the Strip than 'Caprivians'. Secondly, while people still complained generally about the poor standard of schools and health system, elephants damaging crops, lions, hyenas and crocodiles killing cattle and the restrictions on the import of new firearms, a concerted call for the withdrawal of the 'white man's government' was voiced. Thirdly, the Odendaal hearings at Katima Mulilo were a men's affair. There was a marked difference between what the inhabitants called for and the recommendations made by the Odendaal Commission Report.

The UN, Odendaal and the Caprivian Identities

Domestic and international reaction to the Odendaal findings was negative and full of condemnation. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) decided on a radical approach.³⁶ It accelerated support to liberation movements through the Africa Liberation Committee, while the UN condemned the Report and its General Assembly protested by passing Resolution 2074 in 1965.³⁷ The Eastern Caprivi Strip was the focus of attention in the legal battle at the International Court of Justice in the *SA versus Ethiopia and Liberia Case*, as legal teams from both sides wished to make assessments of the state of things. The Eastern Caprivi offered better observation reference for the UN, not only was it perceived to be neglected and isolated, it was also surrounded by other territories and so offered an opportunity to make comparisons with such territories. For South Africa, the Eastern Caprivi was a perfect model of a 'Native happy in his environment' with his traditions and customs distinct and intact and with little detribalization; residents were believed to be content to subsist on game, fish and fruit.

Legal teams from South Africa visited frequently, the biggest group being the September 1964 visit by the Deputy Minister of Native Affairs. He was accompanied by a contingent

³⁴ Cockram 1976, p. 305f, quoted in Zeller, 2000, p.43.

³⁵ Du Pisani, 1986, p. 162.

³⁶ Du Pisani, 1986, p. 166.

³⁷ Zeller, 2000, p. 45.

from the Native Affairs Commission who came to acquaint themselves with the local situation.³⁸ As word of the judgment in favour of SA came at the time when the Minister of Bantu Education, Maree, was in the Caprivi, he had a 'sundowner celebration' in the guest house at Katima Mulilo upon hearing the news over the portable radio he carried.³⁹

Also in the context of the hearing at The Hague, was a visit in April 1965 by General Marshall of the United States of America. His short stay included a visit to the Roman Catholic Mission where he had a talk with Father Raphael, the priest-in-charge.⁴⁰ Other visitors from the United States were Mr. Charles Burton Marshall and his wife during 1965, and, Professor Molnar and his wife in January 1966. At about the same time two attempts by the UN to visit the Eastern Caprivi Strip are recorded. The first was to be a visit by the World Court Judges to see the region for themselves. The visit did not take place even though South Africa had agreed to it, probably because of the attached conditions namely, that the Court should first examine conditions in Liberia and Ethiopia.⁴¹ The second attempt by the UN occurred at the end of 1967, most likely triggered by the decision (or failure) of the World Court which favoured South Africa. South African intelligence sources reported a possible landing of a UN representative at the Mpacha Aerodrome, the military airfield at Katima Mulilo, in a deliberate and unannounced attempt to proclaim in a symbolic way its right over SWA.

At this time an array of South African officials had just left the Caprivi. These were the Prime Minister, Mr. B.J. Vorster (3-7 July 1967), the Minister of the newly named Bantu Administration and Development Department (formally Native Affairs), Mr. M.C. Botha, Minister Maree of Bantu Education, the Ministers for Justice and Health and (specifically for the proposed UN visit), an overnight visit by the Minister of Defence. General Fraser, then head of the South African Army accompanied by other top generals was present as well. Following this quick visit, the South African Army sent a contingent of troops to lie in wait for the UN officials to contest their manoeuvre to land at Mpacha should it come about. It did not.⁴²

The above shows a contest of international dimensions over the Caprivi. Both South Africa and the UN intended to use this isolated territory, seemingly peaceful and contented for South Africa, and neglected and impoverished for the UN, to prove or solidify their positions at The Hague. It would seem for the UN that the best area of the Mandated Territory of SWA to proclaim its right over that of South Africa was the Eastern Caprivi Strip. The

³⁸ Kruger, 1984, p. 45.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

⁴⁰ On the way back from the Mission, the General is reported to have remarked in a lighthearted fashion about Father Raphael: 'If I had that man's looks I would rule extensively'. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁴² Kruger, 1984, pp. 27-28.

Caprivi indeed became a threshold or holding space against the rest of the world during this period, way beyond its dimension of being 'a corridor'.

The Planning Committee

To bridge the administrative gap between 1963 and 1972 when the Legislative Assembly proposed by Odendaal became operational, the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development (Mr. de Wet Nel), appointed a Planning Committee with fairly wide-ranging terms of reference to apply itself to the various aspects of 'development' in the Eastern Caprivi Strip. This period is a transitional phase in the administrative framework in that the old order of the chiefs was to be replaced by elected representatives, with the powers of the chiefs relegated to an advisory capacity. The Planning Committee was composed of the following members, The Native Commissioner (Eastern Caprivi) as chairman, H.H. (Bill) Harvey, head of the engineering branch of the Department, Jan Vorster, a senior member of the agricultural branch of the Department and Piet Muller, an accountant. Attached to the Committee in an advisory capacity were two senior members of the Forestry Department – W.F.J. Immelman and A.E. Sonntag. A geologist, Mr. Wilson, was also attached to the Committee. This Committee excluded the chiefs or their representatives. All of its members, except for the Native Commissioner, were based in Pretoria. It is significant to emphasize that whereas in the past the Native Commissioners had been left to their own devices in the far-flung Eastern Caprivi and had depended on the chiefs, at this time the affairs of the territory were to be managed directly from Pretoria. It is difficult to discern from the records why this was necessary.

The Committee made a comprehensive tour of the Eastern Caprivi Strip during June/July 1964, including formal calls on the chiefs and their councils. Even though the main direction and content of the findings and recommendations were agreed to in talks at Katima Mulilo after the tour, the Committee's report was drawn up in Pretoria, without its chairman. The report was presented on the 7 October 1964 and was approved by the Minister on the 20th October 1964, with an estimated expenditure of R576, 000.⁴³ This is surely not a lot of money but consider that the Eastern Caprivi Strip was used to the following administrative expenditure:⁴⁴

⁴³ Kruger, 1984, Chapter 12, p.14.

⁴⁴ Louw, 1938, p. 31.

Financial Year: 1929 – 1938	
Superintendent's salary	£355
Superintendent's Allowance	£69
Police	£530
2 cattle guards	£36
Total	£990

Financial Year: 1939 -1940	
Acting Superintendent's Salary	£480 - £320
Acting Superintendent's Allowance	£67
Assistant's salary from 1 November 1939	£184
Assistant's allowance	£42
Native police	£354
Cattle guards	£84
Contingencies from 1 November 1939	£150
Total	£1,201

Financial Year: 1940 – 1960	
Superintendent's salary	£600
Superintendent's allowance	£100
Assistant's salary	£440
Assistant's allowance	£100
Native police	£530
Cattle guards	£180
Contingencies from 1 November 1939	£250
Total	£2,200

Table 8: Administrative expenditure in Caprivi from 1929 to early 1960s

While there was a slight increase in the salaries of cattle guards, it is not clear whether this reflected a rise in salaries or was due to additions in staffing. The salaries of Native Police did not improve during this period. The costs of administration do not reflect the expenditure on services as these were transferred to missions, even though later they received annual subsidies from the Administration. Nor are the allowances paid to chiefs, *Ngambelas* and headmen reflected. Previously these allowances had been supplied out of the Department's vote, and for a considerable period were met from the Tribal Trust Funds.

The Planning Committee's recommendations in respect of agriculture and animal husbandry, road construction, improvement of water supply to inland villages and schools and the construction of modern structures at each tribal headquarters were to be covered by the estimated expenditure. The Committee recommended the building of a new hospital at Katima Mulilo and clinics in outlying areas and the introduction of a bus service upon the completion of roads in the territory. A major recommendation was the construction of the Ngweze 'Black' residential area (discussed below). It was the Planning Committee's Recommendations, not Odendaal's, as intimated by Kangumu (2000), that placed the Eastern Caprivi Strip on a fast track for infrastructural development. However, the concept of development should be applied with caution in this context. Zeller points out that the Odendaal Recommendations were not concerned with social services and agricultural development. The Commission's interest lay with large-scale infrastructural projects such as proposed dams for electric power generation and irrigation schemes.⁴⁵ This differs slightly from the greater social emphasis of the Planning Committee. In both cases the envisaged development was planned for the people and not with the people. Regardless of good intentions, non-participatory projects exclude a social angle to development as it removes the aspect of ownership and acceptance.

Growth of Katima Mulilo and Social Control

The implementation of projects recommended by the Planning Committee required increased personnel both from the Union and locally, such as an additional Magistrate and Native Commissioner, an agricultural officer, a senior superintendent of works and two assistants, one for roads and services such as water supply, and the other for general maintenance. This necessitated an increased demand for office and accommodation space. Another factor which would need attention was the rapidly increasing population of Katima Mulilo with people migrating there from rural parts, since this period marks an intense shift from a subsistence livelihood to a cash economy.

Arrangements started in November 1964 for the layout of the town in its new dimensions, which was to be 7 or 8 miles in length with a width varying from 1 to 3 miles. It included the administrative headquarters and an area set aside for White settlement, the Ngweze Village, a residential area set aside for Blacks, the trading post at the Katima Mulilo rapids that belonged to William (Bill) Finaughty and the mission with its hospital and schools, including the Namwi Island. The 'new' Katima Mulilo and its environs were declared a nature reserve even before construction could take place. As such, no person was

⁴⁵ Zeller, 2000, p. 44.

allowed to reside, cultivate or keep stock in the nature reserve except those living either at Ngweze Village, at the mission, at headquarters or at Finaughty. Dogs were not allowed to be in the nature reserve except on a permit. The cutting of live trees without permission and hunting were also not allowed. In March 1965 a construction company from Southern Rhodesia, Lewis Construction, arrived to start work on the Ngweze Village and the Headquarters that included the area set aside for white settlement. At the same time another team arrived from the Transvaal Provincial Administration to carry out the work of constructing the Mpacha aerodrome.

Ngweze⁴⁶ Village Development

Lewis Construction set about constructing the Ngweze Village, the first 'formal' residential area for Blacks, along a watercourse (mulapo) bearing the same name. Work proceeded quickly. A number of locals were employed as learner artisans and others in lesser capacities, so that by January 1966 about fifty houses were ready for occupation. To maintain 'health standards' in the village (in reality to effect social control) the Administration recalled John Matali Milinga from retirement in March 1966 to be the first 'superintendent' and disciplinarian of the Ngweze Village. Part of his work involved ensuring that rules were adhered to, amongst them the rules that no structural additions were to be made, no nails hammered into walls and that all visitors were to be reported.

When Mr. John Matali Milinga finally retired in 1968, control of the Ngweze Village was vested in an Advisory Board. The Board was formed in 1968 and held its first meeting on the 19 October 1968 at Ngweze Bantu Community School. The Board worked in conjunction with Mr. Morule, who was appointed as the Supervisor of Ngweze Bantu Township. The first elected office bearers were Mr. J.M. Sechocho, Chairman, Mr. I.M. Selebogo, Vice-Chairman and Mr. D.K. Ntuntu, Secretary, all Sotho-speaking South African officials. The Bantu Affairs Commissioner and his Assistant, the Circuit Inspector of Bantu Education, the Superintendent of Works, a Representative of the Bantu Investment Corporation and the Police were invited to these meetings.⁴⁷ A traditional council system was introduced in Ngweze Township. These were representatives of the chiefs in the township, functioning as ambassadors. The council consisted of headmen from both the Masubiya and Mafwe (Bayeyi) tribal groups who were to administer (traditional) justice to their respective peoples. Cases involving members from the Mafwe (Bayeyi) were heard by the headmen from the

⁴⁶ Ngweze is a Subiya word for 'stab me'. It is the name of the sister of Subiya Chief Liswani I who resided at Nakabunze, now Katima Mulilo, at the baobab tree famously known as the toilet tree.

⁴⁷ The ordinary members who served on this committee over time included: Mr. Kabunga, Mr. Masule, Mr. Simasiku, Mr. Ramoba, Mr. Mabuku, Mr. Sikabala, and Mr. Morule.

Mafwe side only and *vice versa*. Cases that involved members of different groups were taken to the Native Commissioner's Court. Cases heard in this court were subject to review or appeal at the respective traditional headquarters of their people, even while they (the people) were resident in the town.

The traditional court (chiefs' representatives) was responsible, among other tasks, for issuing permits for visitors to Ngweze township; should these wish to stay longer, the matter would be referred to the Native Commissioner. There was, however, conflict between the Advisory Board and the traditional court in Katima Mulilo. While the latter was required to attend Advisory Board meetings, they boycotted them, claiming that the Board had taken away their powers despite the fact that they were the chiefs' representatives. This was only resolved with the intervention of the Native Commissioner.⁴⁸

The construction of Ngweze Village could be viewed, despite its good intentions, as just another form of social control. It occurred at a time when the authorities were confronting the rising tide of nationalism directed from the Mafulo informal village, where Kruger maintains there was no form of control. Mafulo was demolished after the completion of the Ngweze Village and its residents moved to the new township where CANU activists were either excluded or closely monitored. Two other villages that were within the boundaries of the newly designed town of Katima Mulilo were removed to localities outside the area. As the town began to define itself, ordinary people were increasingly pushed to the margins. As Kruger concedes, the idea of declaring Katima Mulilo a nature reserve, 'apart from the idea of preserving the natural order ... was schemed to prevent loose settlements moving in to no good purpose – an inevitable development unless checked from the beginning'.⁴⁹ The declaration of spaces as exclusive 'conservation areas' or 'military zones' as a form of social control (*cordon sanitaire*) was widely used by the apartheid regime. In the Caprivi itself, a classic example is that of Western Caprivi. The area was proclaimed a Nature Park in 1963 and upgraded to a Game Reserve in 1968. It was declared a South African military zone and closed to civilians before any activities could start.⁵⁰

Despite determination to prevent informal settlements around Katima Mulilo, a number of them sprang up. Just outside Ngweze Village an informal settlement developed at the site where Lewis Construction workers camped during the construction of Ngweze Village, incidentally named Lewis after that company. The Lewis informal settlement was only de-

⁴⁸ Minutes of Meeting of the Advisory Board held at the Court House on the 13 February 1970, at 4 pm. NAN: No. N.1/15/3-9

⁴⁹ Kruger, Chapter 12, p. 48.

⁵⁰ See Brown & Jones, 1994, p. 85. See also Brenzinger, 1997, p. 30.

molished after independence when its residents were moved to Chotto, the biggest informal settlement in Katima Mulilo at present.

Lewis Construction Company's corporate stamp on Katima Mulilo did not end with Ngweze village. The company was contracted to build the Katima Mulilo headquarters, an area set aside for white settlement. In this way apartheid South Africa's policy of segregated residential areas was transplanted to the emerging urban landscape of Katima Mulilo. The segregated spatial urban landscape of Katima Mulilo, however, defied the colonial push northwards (to their hinterland) for blacks. In this case headquarters and white settlement occupied the northern end, along the scenic Zambezi River while Ngweze was sited at the south end of Katima Mulilo. Apart from the fact that the river was an attraction, consideration might also have been given to the fact that if Blacks were to reside along the river, it would make uncontrolled crossing into newly independent and seemingly hostile Zambia easier, this being where a significant number of CANU activists had fled. A belt of forest separated the two settlements. This would prove a security risk when the armed liberation struggle launched by PLAN (SWAPO's military wing) was intensified since it exposed whites living along the river to the constant threat of shelling from Zambian soil. The SADF (South African Defence Force) responded by constructing the Katima Military Base in the centre of Katima Mulilo in the forest belt separating the black residential area from the white. In this way, social interaction between whites and blacks was made impossible by a buffer zone created by the military base. Social interaction was considered highly undesirable on the part of the Administration as reflected below in a heading in the minutes of the Advisory Board, 'Irregularity: Movement of Whites in the Bantu Township':⁵¹

Captain Malan [police] replied that this case was under police investigation. The Bantu Affairs Commissioner requested that cases of this nature be reported immediately to the police and stated that only those [whites] who are permitted by their services would be allowed to enter the Bantu Township.

The influence Lewis Construction had on Katima Mulilo was not limited to buildings, it affected the social life of the residents of the Eastern Caprivi Strip as well. The Advisory Committee raised objections to 'unregistered marriages', which it perceived would place a 'burden upon the people of Caprivi in future caused by temporary marriages between Caprivi ladies and foreign men.'⁵² The Native Commissioner's response was that this was a matter dealing with custom and tradition in which he was not prepared to interfere. He, however, offered to impress upon the manager of Lewis Construction the importance of establishing

⁵¹ Minutes of the Advisory Board Meeting held at Ngweze Bantu Community School on the 9 May 1969 at 4pm.

⁵² *Ibid.*

the marital status of any employee leaving the Caprivi and that the *Kuta* (traditional court) representatives should certify such status.⁵³ No documentary evidence could be found that any case concerning this was brought either before the Advisory Board or the *Kuta*. This is not to suggest that such unions did not exist. The writer has cousins who were fathered in this way and who were never to know their father as he left while they were still young. The issue of unregistered marriages was broader than the intervention of Lewis Construction in the social life of Katima Mulilo during this time and bordered on social control, particularly the influx controls over women, classified at the time as 'Unemployed and unattached Women'.⁵⁴

The Advisory Board complained that these women were earning their living through the selling of beer and immoral practices. It was resolved the unemployed should be sent back to their villages as all available accommodation was for workers. This was a male chauvinistic interpretation of the social problem. Firstly, it assumed that the 'immoral practices' were brought about as a result of women being in town, the role of men being overlooked. Secondly, save for a few, most workers of the time were men and most of those forced out were females. This added to the fact that the majority of expatriate workers were themselves male. These were mainly Rhodesians working for Lewis Construction and scores of South Africans (black and white) who were imported to construct the Mpacha Military Airfield by the Roads Department of the Transvaal Provincial Administration. By bringing in these men without their spouses, the Administration laid the foundation for immoral practices, for which they now blamed Lewis Construction.

The Mpacha Military Airbase is discussed in detail in chapter six in a section dealing with the Caprivi as a military frontier. It is enough to repeat here that from an administrative and developmental point of view, it was 'an anomaly to have a sophisticated airbase in an underdeveloped backwater like Mpacha'. The Airbase, about 15 miles west of Katima Mulilo, was connected to the town by a road that was the smoothest and widest in the whole Caprivi Strip at the time.⁵⁵

Other informal settlements that developed in the townscape of Katima Mulilo during this period were: Piggery, Dairy, Coloureds and Wenela (WNLA). The naming of these emergent urban landscapes follows functional designations common in African sections of towns. The Piggery and Dairy informal settlements developed around and were named after projects proposed by the Planning Committee in those locations to provide pork and dairy products to the residents of Katima Mulilo. For places where people lived to carry

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Kangumu, 2000, p. 68.

such names was really a mockery of the poor living conditions in those areas deemed to be so filthy that only pigs would survive in them. The term 'Coloureds' was self explanatory, the section of the town reserved for people of 'mixed' blood, while 'Wenela' was the site of a migrant labour recruitment depot used by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association.

The Caprivi Legislative Assembly and Caprivi Government

From 1939, the period the Union Department of Native Affairs took direct control of the Eastern Caprivi Strip, to 1972 the administrative function remained vested in a magistrate who acted in consultation with the two chiefs. Under this system the magistrate had limited influence in the day-to-day affairs of the people. The chiefs retained a very large measure of authority in tribal affairs. The normal exercise of powers by the chiefs could not be termed as autocratic because a full discussion in the *Kuta* (tribal court) was held in all matters affecting the tribe, a system which had been described by Lord Hailey (in reference to Bechuanaland) in *An African Survey* (revised in 1956) as a 'sort of parliamentary *levee en masse* of the tribe'.⁵⁶ Debates in the *Kuta*, often keen and frankly expressed, were regularly attended. The *Kuta* is an ordinary tribunal for the trial of all cases presided over by the chief or his *Ngambela* (prime minister).

The first stage of constitutional development towards 'self-government' or Bantustanism was bestowed on the Eastern Caprivi Strip when Mr. M.C. Botha, then Minister of Bantu Administration and Development and of Bantu Education opened the first inaugural session of the Caprivi Legislative Council on 15 March 1972 at Ngweze, apparently at the unanimous request of the 'leaders' of the Caprivi in 1971.⁵⁷ This cast away the old order of administration through a magistrate/native commissioner. The officials who served as magistrates and their terms in the Eastern Caprivi Strip are listed on the table below.

Except for Trollope, who had been the South West Africa Administration's Additional Native Commissioner for the northern territories, all other magistrates had been seconded from South Africa and returned there after service in the Caprivi.

The Legislative Council of the East Caprivi 'Homeland' consisted of both chiefs and representatives from the Masubiya and 'Mafwe' tribal groups with its seat in Ngweze. The Legislative Assembly had an Executive Council to give effect to its decisions. This was composed of Chief Josiah Mutwa Moraliswani of the Masubiya, elected as first Chief Councillor,

⁵⁶ Quoted in Kruger, 1984, Chapter 12, p. 62.

⁵⁷ See Opening Address by the M.C. Botha, Eastern Caprivi Legislative Council at Ngweze; see also 'Verrigtinge van die Eerste Sessie van die Tweede Wetgewende Raad van Caprivi 21-23 September 1976'.

dealing with Authority Affairs and Finance, Chief Mamili of the Mafwe as councillor for Justice, Simasiku Simwanza for Agriculture and Works and David Siukuta for Education. The Administrative link with Pretoria at this time was a Commissioner-General, E.F. Potgieter, appointed to 'guide Caprivi to self-government'. The seconded staff who were directors of departments were, Maytham as the Chief Director, Louis Nel for Education, Paul Fouche for Agriculture and Works and Nic (N.J.) Badenhorst for Justice. This situation remained until 19 March 1976 when a new Constitution ushered in a 'Caprivi Government' with complete symbols of 'state': an anthem, a flag and coat of arms. In this way the Caprivi and its identities were inaugurated and the territory now became a fully fledged South African Bantustan up to 1980 when AG8 (Legislation concerning the three-tier ethnic system of central, regional and local government) brought the region administratively back into (SWA) Namibia.

Name	Term	Comment
L.F.W. Trollope	25/10/1939 – 31/12/1945	See footnote 58 next page
C.E. Kruger	1/1/1946 – 31/12/1946	
L.F.W. Trollope	1/1/1947 – 12/1/1953	
A.B. Colenbrander	13/1/1953 – 6/12/1956	
M.J. Verceuil	7/12/1956 – 13/1/1959	
D.J. Wium	14/1/1959 – 5/4/1961	
N.W.D. Boshoff	6/4/1961 – 25/8/1963	
A.B. Colenbrander	26/8/1963 – 29/10/1963	Temporarily there waiting next fixed appointment
C.E. Kruger	30/10/1963 – 1/4/1968	
P.N. Hansmeyer	2/4/1968 -31/7/1971	
J.J. Rossouw	1/8/1971 – 31/1/1972	
E.L. Gregory	1/2/1972 – 23/3/1972	Thereafter Chief Director in the new order

Table 9: Native Commissioners who served in Eastern Caprivi during the South African period

The process to return the Eastern Caprivi Strip into the administrative ambit of the South West African Administration (SWAA) started with the Turnhalle Constitutional Conference (1975-1977). A delegation from the Eastern Caprivi Strip attended sessions of the Turn-

halle Conference in Windhoek under a loose grouping called the 'Caprivi Alliance.' The Caprivi Alliance, later transformed into the Caprivi Alliance Party (CAP), was founded in November 1977 by members of the Masubiya and Mafwe tribal authorities under the two chiefs as leaders. The party joined the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) when it was launched in 1977 under the leadership of Mafwe chief Richard Temuso Muhinda Mamili. An identity specific to the Caprivi was already being dismantled by the time it reached fruition in 1976, since the Turnhalle process brought the Caprivi back into mainstream SWA politics.

One significant factor that merits further research is the importance of the radio as a form of communication. The extent to which rural communities had access to radio, the radio stations that were listened to and the relationship between programme content and the construction of identities in the region all impacted on the construction of a Caprivi identity.

The Caprivi Alliance Party (CAP, of the DTA) stood unopposed in the 1980 elections held for the newly created Caprivi Second Tier Legislative Assembly after the promulgation of AG8 (1980). According to the assumption that there were two ethnic groups in Caprivi (Mafwe and Masubiya), the 20 seats in the Assembly were divided as follows:⁵⁹

- Elected Seats: Eight elected seats – divided equally between the two tribes;
- Nominated seats: Six seats for each tribe, with the two chiefs automatically receiving a seat each;
- Executive Committee: Composed of the two chiefs as rotating Chairmen and with equal representation for each tribe.

⁵⁸ Leslie French Watts Trollope did not resign from the service as is stated to Kruger, he was dismissed from the service evidently 'owing to inefficiency – never kept any books or accounts. A brilliant man but too lazy' (Entry of 25 December 1952, Log Book of the Holy Family Mission, Katima Mulilo, Caprivi Strip, SWA/Namibia, Book I, 1943-1994, p. 31). When his replacement arrived he expelled him from the Eastern Caprivi Strip for not having 'appropriate permits'. He eventually left on 25 December 1952 and took up an appointment with the Southern Rhodesian Immigration Department overseeing the transport of men from Barotseland wishing to take up work in Southern Rhodesia, to the Victoria Falls and all matters related to enlistment. Later he served as Manager of the Uleze and also as Manager of the Boat Club. He died on 28 July 1965 of a heart attack at Mwandi Hospital (old Sesheke, Northern Rhodesia) while on his way to visit Kruger at Katima Mulilo. He was buried at Katima Mulilo in the grounds between headquarters and the mission under a Muchenje Tree (*Diospyros mespiliformis*) in the grounds of the Zambezi Lodge today. He never returned to South Africa.

⁵⁹ Adapted from Pütz, von Egidy & Caplan, *Namibia Handbook and Political Who's Who*, Windhoek: Magus, 1989: p. 420.



Figure 7: Colonial perceptions of people and identities: 'Traditional dancers from Caprivi', 1970s or 1980s

It is necessary to remark on the historical continuities that characterize the identities of the Caprivi. An important aspect of the culmination of the Caprivi Identity is the transition from tribal to political representation (see above). It is apparent from the above that the constituencies for political representation still carried over the presumed historical divide between two tribal groupings, the Mafwe and Masubiya. It is this historical continuity that paralyzed the functioning of the East Caprivi Second Tier Government, and provided the greatest source of disagreements (see chapter six) in the Caprivi i.e. not necessarily the involvement of the chiefs in politics, as argued by other writers.⁶⁰ A proposed amendment to AG29 in 1985 sought to change representation from the two-legged tribal formula to representation by elected political parties after repeated attempts by the Administrator and other emissaries from Windhoek failed to heal the breach between the two composite constitu-

⁶⁰ See Pütz, et al, *ibid.*, who argue that the source of complication in Caprivi politics has been the involvement of chiefs in politics who are traditionally not supposed to align with any political party. For me, this is a narrow definition of the problem. The traditionally ethnic rivalry between the two tribal groups predates the transition to political representation from tribal formula. Their view that previous Mafwe Chief Richard Temuso Muhinda Mamili was deposed due to his involvement in politics is debatable, to say the least.

encies of the Caprivi. The amendment tabled in the National Assembly in Windhoek was being considered by the Administrator-General when UN Resolution 435 took centre stage.

An important aspect to record which occurred during the transition from tribal to political representation, (especially with the establishment of the Legislative Assembly in 1972), was the breaking away from Mafwe authority of the communities who reasserted a Bayeyi identity. Whereas previously that identity was known and recorded in official documents as Mafwe (Bayeyi), this was dropped from 1972 (see chapter two for detailed discussion).

Summary

The discussion in this and the previous chapter deals with two issues. Firstly, the evolution of colonial administrative control in the Caprivi Strip, particularly the eastern part, east of the Mashi/Kwando River and secondly, the way in which this helped shape the creation of Caprivi identities.

With regard to the first issue, the colonial administrative identity in the Caprivi Strip dates back to its creation in 1890 from an agreement between Germany and Britain that guaranteed the former access to the Zambezi. Four phases were identified in the Caprivi colonial administrative identity. During the first phase (1890-1909), the Caprivi Strip was administered as a German sphere of influence. Because of this, it was argued, it took almost nineteen years before Germany established an administration in the territory. The theory that this was due to Germany having lost interest in this 'poor' territory during this time was refuted in favour of the argument that the nature of spheres of influence is not to vest territorial rights in the holder as these are areas reserved for future action. A holder could decide not to occupy a sphere of influence at all. Another misconception refuted is the usual argument that the territory turned into a no man's land during this time. The territory still rightly belonged to its indigenous inhabitants who were under the subjugation of the Aluyi. Perhaps what was lacking was an effective European administration during this time. An administrative tool for monitoring their sphere of influence were the periodic reports, which Germany received (1904, 1905).

During the second phase (1909-1914) the German Resident, Captain Streitwolf, established a local administration based on two tribal authorities, the Mafwe (Bayeyi) and the Masubiya. This laid the foundation for the construction of a two-legged Caprivi identity, a *status quo* that was maintained in subsequent phases of the colonial administrative identity. Apart from this the German colonial administrative identity of the Caprivi *Zipfel* was featureless.

A pertinent aspect of the third phase (1914-1939) was the transferability of the Caprivi. It was shunted between different centres of administrative control (Bechuanaland, SWAA, and Union of South Africa's Dept of Native Affairs), arguably because of an image of remoteness based on a particular reading of the region's history and geography. The colonial administrative tool during this phase, apart from the resident policeman as superintendent, was a number of irregular inspection tours. A yearly police patrol across the territory to outlying posts accounted for control during this phase.

The last phase (1939-1980) can be usefully divided into two parts. The first covers the establishment of a Bantu Reserve (1939-1962), a period when the Eastern Caprivi suffered total neglect and the second, the establishment of a Bantustan (1964-1980) when a shift in administrative identity occurred, characterized by investment by the colonial state and a transition from tribal to political representation.

The second objective in this and the previous chapter was to determine how the colonial administrative identity helped shape Caprivian identities. Two important colonial administrative characteristics of the Caprivi emerged, namely that it was swampy, feverish (malarial) inhabited by wandering 'bushmen' and therefore not suitable for white (read human) settlement. Secondly, that 'historical' and 'geographical' factors made it difficult to administer. The result was that it was administered as a separate entity, which gravitated more to neighbouring territories than effectively incorporated as part of SWA. The provision of services such as education or health were either entrusted to the control of adjacent territories or left in the hands of missionaries, who had their headquarters in those territories. The result of this was that an image of the Caprivi emerged which was unhealthy, remote and separate. The inhabitants were administered in ways that made them feel more a part of Barotseland and Bechuanaland than SWA. When events so dictated, the Caprivi was forced to cut ties with those territories, either to be 'independent' (for a brief four year period as a Bantustan) and then brought back into mainstream SWA. By this time, however, the Caprivi Identity had already emerged and people had begun to identify themselves as 'Caprivians'.

5 The Frontier Identity of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*

Germany acquired an 'access corridor to the Zambezi' through a territorial exchange as part of the Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty with Great Britain.¹ However, its ambitious colonial utopian scheme of a rail link or shipping route via the Zambezi, connecting German Southwest Africa (DSWA) and German East Africa, became a 'dream frustrated'² partly because the Zambezi, due to its many rapids, was not navigable throughout. Germany did, however, manage to extend her interests deep into the interior of southern Africa cutting through two British territories, the Bechuanaland Protectorate and Northern Rhodesia. Germany was therefore able to keep British influence and expansion in check by strategically inserting her own presence in southern Africa. The Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* became Germany's frontier neighbouring onto British territories and not merely an access corridor to the Zambezi.

It was the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel's* position as a frontier territory that would later transform it from a mere backwater on the Zambezi to one of utmost strategic military importance during South African rule and make it independent Namibia's 'Socio-economic Tail-Light'.³ This chapter will examine the different 'frontiers' that are embedded in the Caprivi as perceived and defined by different state and non-state actors in its history and the multi-faceted identities that were to emerge out of this over many centuries. I have limited the discussion to the following: the region as a refuge during the pre-colonial period, labour migrancy as an aspect of frontier identity, lawlessness and the idea of a 'no man's land' as aspects of frontier identity and, finally, the implications of the ECZ as a military frontier for both PLAN (the Peoples' Liberation Army of Namibia) and the SADF (South African Defence Force).

The construction of a frontier identity was initially fed by the (mis)conception that the territory of the Eastern Caprivi was not an end – but a means to an end, a transit or nodal point. This contributed to a perception of 'uselessness'. During South African rule, the quality of 'usefulness' emerged strongly, particularly in the confrontation against the advance of 'Black Africa'. The definition of frontier adopted here is that which implies extremity, the ex-

¹ For a detailed discussion see Chapter Two.

² Louw, W., 'Caprivi: A Dream Frustrated', in S. Davis and Sey Davis (eds.), *SWA ANNUAL*, 1979, Windhoek: SWA Publications.

³ This argument is made by Zeller, Wolfgang and Kangumu, Bennett, in 'From Apartheid Bantustan to Namibia's Socio-economic Tail-Light: Caprivi Under Old and New Indirect Rule', in Melber, Henning, (ed.), *Cross-examining Transition in Namibia: Socio-economic and Ideological transformation since Independence*, Uppsala: The Nordic Africa Institute, 2007.

treme limit of settled land beyond which lies wilderness.⁴ Embedded in this is the disregard for the native population, their existence and wishes. 'Unsettled' refers to the lack of European settlement and 'wilderness' was presented as the antithesis of western civilization.

The Mfecane and Refuge as an Aspect of Frontier Identity

The Aluyi⁵ had subjugated the people of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* before the arrival of the Makololo, to whom they then fell victim. For the Aluyi during this time, the territory was utilized mainly as a granary, hunting and fishing ground.⁶ As Venning put it: 'What makes the strip of value to Lewanika [of Barotse] is on account of the grazing, reed cutting, fishing and suitability of certain areas for making winter gardens.'⁷ The Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was thus a 'frontier of plenty' for the Aluyi at this stage.

With the advent of the Mfecane movement (also known as Difagane⁸), the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was transformed from a land of opportunity for the Aluyi to a source of danger posed by the migrating hordes of Makololo under Sebetwane and the Matebele of Mzilikazi. The Mfecane started as a social, political and military revolution in the 1800s and resulted in the creation of the Zulu Kingdom under Shaka Zulu. The movement produced conquest, warfare, population flight and social dislocation.⁹ Omer-Cooper describes the Mfecane as:

One of the greatest formative events of African history, (which) ... permanently modified the ethnic map of much of Bantu Africa and thereby played an important part in establishing the framework of political and cultural life in a number of modern African states.¹⁰

⁴ Soanes, Catherine & Stevenson, Angus (eds.), *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 571.

⁵ Now commonly known as Lozi or Barotse. Together with the Makololo, they are discussed in Chapter One.

⁶ The use of certain Caprivi Islands for fishing by Northern Rhodesians continued even during the colonial period in what became defined over time as 'Barotse Privileges'. See the discussion in Chapter Two.

⁷ J.H. Venning (undated), 'Newly Acquired Country between Zambezi and Mashi Rivers.' (Manuscript, NAN: A.589).

⁸ Difagane is an Nguni word for 'forced migration'. See Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson, *The Oxford History of South Africa, vol. 1: South Africa to 1870*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969, p.391.

⁹ P. du Toit, *State-Building and Democracy in Southern Africa: A comparative study of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe*, Pretoria: HSRC, 1995, p. 75.

¹⁰ J.D. Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath: A Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Bantu Africa*, Evaton: Northwestern University Press, 1966, pp. 4, 174.

Chief Liswani of the Masubiya helped Sebetwane to cross the Zambezi at Impalila Island. In return Sebetwane promised to give him part of the war booty (cattle and people). He planned to conquer the Toka-Leya (Chief Liswani's arch-enemies) before he overran Barotseland and established himself at Naliele, however, nothing came of his promise to Chief Liswani. Instead, Sebetwane consolidated his rule, incorporating Chief Liswani's area of influence. This turned out to be counter-productive for state formation in a period characterized by territorial feuds.

This was a very unstable period in the history of pre-colonial central southern Africa, marked by military confrontation, murder, pillaging, treachery and alliance building. Sebetwane had created an implacable enemy. Chief Liswani formed an alliance with Mzilikazi and invited a Matebele army to attack Sebetwane. A joint force consisting of Chief Liswani and the Matebele army harassed Sebetwane several times to the extent that he became strongly distrustful of the Masubiya. The Makololo of Sebetwane called Chief Liswani to Naliele with the promise that they would give him the cattle that Sebetwane promised him; instead they murdered him in cold blood.¹¹

A later invading army of the Matebele was destroyed on its return from Barotseland by a cunning move on the part of one Simalumba of the Masubiya. When the Matebele army reached the village of Simalumba, he agreed to take them across the Zambezi, but instead of doing so he landed them on an island – Sikachila. As the last of the Matabele were being taken over to the island Simalumba capsized the canoe and swam back to the bank. The Matebele, who were not used to the conditions on the island and were unable to get to the mainland, died from exhaustion, starvation and disease. The survivors were killed by the Aluyi on the island, which became known as 'Sioli sa Matebele' (Island of the Matebele).¹²

The death of Chief Liswani and the demise of this contingent of the Matebele army cleared the path for Sebetwane to establish his headquarters at Linyanti (now known as Sangwali) in what became known as the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. He felt safe from the constant danger posed by the Matebele of Mzilikazi (his natural enemy) because he was well protected by the swampy rivers that bordered the territory. This area provided a natural refuge or hiding place for him and his vast herds of cattle. Ironically, his people were reduced by illness in this river-bounded frontier of refuge. This provided the Aluyi with a perfect opportunity to reclaim their sovereignty in Barotseland and the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* in 1864.

¹¹ For a further discussion on this incident see Masubiya Chieftaincy in Chapter One.

¹² Lozi Language. Unpublished notes on an Interview with Chief Chikamatondo of the Masubiya on the subject of his position as Chief of the Masubiya Tribe and having a bearing on the repeated claims by one Mulwaliswani (Moraliswani) to chieftaincy (NAN: A.871). See also Kruger (1963), Trollope (1940) and Likando (1989).

After reasserting their control, the Aluyi posted representatives in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* to guard against the return of the Makololo and prevent attacks from possible enemies such as the Matebele and the Batawana of Ngamiland. Once again the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* became a buffer zone, the southernmost frontier of Bulozhi.

The Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* provided a sense of security – refuge – for its inhabitants over generations. While it is accepted that people habitually move away from diseases or other calamities, here even when in search of food within the bounds of the under populated Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, they could simply move to another corner to avoid looming danger. In this way they avoided attacks from invading parties. It is believed that the majority of Matotela (Totela) fled away from the cruel rule of Sepopa of the Aluyi into the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* to hide in the thick Hukwe veld (forests) to avoid an attack. Chief Liswani II (Nkonkwenana, Mutola Lizuku) of the Masubiya established his headquarters at Impalila (Mparira) Island because he did not want to live in the same village with Isuswa, Sebetwane's emissary, who was posted there following the murder of Chief Liswani I by the Makololo. The island became his place of refuge. When Sepopa pursued him, Chief Liswani II left Impalila Island with his people and entered into the Bechuanaland Protectorate (chapter two).

More recently, when the German Captain Streitwolf¹³ entered the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* to establish an administration there, he apparently found a territory 'deserted'. The inhabitants did not follow their Lozi overlords as was widely expected, they went into hiding either on islands or swampy areas or in the thicket of the forests. The Aluyi and possibly also the British, had warned them of the cruelty of the approaching Germans who had the 1904-1907 Herero-Damara-Nama Genocide hanging over their heads. People in the territory were used to migrate in order to survive. This migration transcended contemporary boundaries. When danger loomed on the north bank of the Zambezi (Northern Rhodesia, Zambia), people moved across to the south bank (the Caprivi), or simply into Bechuanaland Protectorate (Botswana). The rivers formed natural barriers (frontiers) and the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, being the rivers' depression, formed a natural place of refuge.

Outlaw Frontier, 1890 – 1909

Maria Fisch and others have provided a detailed account of 'lawlessness' in the Caprivi *Zipfel* between 1890 and 1909.¹⁴ During this time, the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* turned into an

¹³ The Masubiya called him Kambungu while to the Mafwe he was known as Katara Matunga, one who surveys the land.

¹⁴ Fisch, Maria, 1999, *The Caprivi Strip during the German colonial period, 1890 to 1914 [with a chapter on the boundary dispute up to the present]*, Windhoek: Out of Africa, pp. 43-51. See also

El Dorado¹⁵ for shady characters, criminals or prisoners who went into hiding and a happy hunting ground for both part time and professional trophy hunters. In some instances these ne'er-do-wells competed with the locals as hunting guides for Englishmen who lived in Sesheke and Livingstone.¹⁶ The locals benefited from the meat obtained from hunting trips. There were other Bechuanaland nationals and South African Boers involved in this trade, particularly after a number of them were uprooted during the South African War. Fisch states that most of the Boers entered the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* via Kazungula and Linyanti and that their number was put at 50 in 1904 and continued to increase.

Fortunes were made from hunting, farming and smuggling arms and ammunition. Rothe (1906: 1-34) is quoted by Fisch as claiming that one could make a profit of approximately 4 000 Mark every season. Game was plenty in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* partly, according to Streitwolf, because the territory was Paramount Chief Lewanika's private hunting reserve until 1895 (Streitwolf 1911: 227f). The area was very sparsely populated at this time and therefore game was left virtually undisturbed. This is partly why the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* became an 'outlaw frontier'. It was a place where criminals could hide and carry on their activities away from the prying eyes of others.

Frequently intertwined with the concept of lawlessness is the description of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* as a 'no man's land'.¹⁷ There was no official European presence in the territory at this time and the native population was disregarded, probably because most commentators described them as 'spineless', 'little serfs', and 'slaves' of the Aluyi. They were considered of no consequence. Even the Lozi presence was not recognized in this regard and, indeed, if the Lozi state had such an effective grip on the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, it is doubtful whether such criminal acts would have continued undeterred. The fact that the chief received a third of every annual hunting licence paid in British territories¹⁸ would have made Lozi chiefs expel these outlaws or compel them to obtain hunting licences. The likely explanation is that Lozi chiefs either benefited from such trade indirectly without the knowledge of British authorities, or their influence on the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* is grossly exaggerated. More than at any other time this is when Lozi rule over the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was supposed to be most organized.

The outlaws managed to find a safe haven, a river bounded frontier where they were not subjected to restrictions and were out of reach of the long arm of the law. In this frontier

Zeller (2000), Pretorius (1975), Trollope (1940, 1956/7).

¹⁵ Fisch, 1999, p. 37.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Trollope (1956/7).

¹⁸ Fisch (1999).

they acted as the law, giving credence to the assertion that indeed the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* had the attribute of being a 'refuge' as part of its Frontier Identity.

Migrant Labour as an Aspect of Frontier Identity

Any study of labour extraction in central southern Africa during the pre-colonial and colonial periods should recognize a number of factors. The first being the highly mobile nature of the inhabitants, people moved freely from one part to another across what are now political boundaries. Bad harvests, family squabbles, high flood levels, or outbreaks of cattle diseases could initiate movement.¹⁹ Secondly, artificial boundaries split some tribes whose people occupied both banks of a river. Thirdly, the general labour shortages in Southern Africa in the early 1900s restricted agricultural, mining, infrastructure, and industrial development.²⁰

Finally, a factor characterising the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* in the pre-colonial period was the abundance of food in fish, game and fruit. An entry in the 1940 Annual Report recognizes this fact: 'There is very little economic urge for the Strip Natives to leave their homes to seek work elsewhere. Their subsistence needs can all be met from local resources and taxation is not on a scale to force them to go out and work'.²¹

From 1909, or even earlier, a number of able-bodied men periodically left their homes to seek work opportunities outside the territory. Many of these made use of the facilities provided by the contract labour system. The Eastern Caprivi Strip became a sought after frontier for labour supply during the colonial period and that this 'going away' and 'coming back' reinforced a sense of 'Caprivianness'. The routes towards places of contract labour travelled north, east and south and excluded the west (SWA). Had this not been the case, the 'Caprivians' at that early stage could have been 'Namibianised'.

Labour extraction from the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* dates back to pre-colonial times. From the writings of Livingstone, Pinto, Arnot, Colliard, Jalla, Bertrand, Gibbons, Harding, Hamilton and others descriptions of forced labour and slavery are vividly expressed. Consider the following, provided by Captain Bertrand (circa 1895), on slavery as practised by the Lozi:

The (Lozi) chiefs can carry off a child from a family who... are not Lozi; the child then becomes a slave. All his labour he gives to his master who has the right of life and death over him ... The King and his elder sister, Queen Mokwai receive every year as tribute a number of children of both sexes who become their servants ... They give those they have no need of to their chiefs

¹⁹ Pretorius 1975 p.10.

²⁰ Zeller, 2000, p. 40.

²¹ Trollope, 1940, p. 24.

or other persons. A Morotsi (Lozi) can never be a slave ... All the kings' subjects' excepting the Barotsi are liable to enforced labor.²²

Slave trading by Mambari from Angola was stopped in 1889. Mainly as a result of pressure, Lewanika issued a Royal Proclamation in 1906 which freed 30 000 slaves.²³ The practice of slavery continued, albeit illegally. Writing in 2006, Andrew N. Matjila observes that up to the late 1970s guns from the 'period of the Mambaris' were still found in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. The Mambaris were armed men who with their assistants captured slaves in the territory and chained them to the long line of people on their way to Dar es Salaam. Matjila argues that another, even more significant slave route that impacted on Caprivi lay to the west, to the Angolan slave ports, from where '[T]heir final destination was the Americas.'²⁴ It is possible, therefore, that slave-trading took place in this secluded frontier on the Zambezi even though not much research on this topic has been undertaken as yet.

While the Caprivi *Zipfel* was not a major issue in the negotiations resulting in the 1890 Anglo-German Treaty,²⁵ it nevertheless held prospects in the view of the German colonial lobby for natural resources and human labour. The negotiations came at a time after the 1885 agreement between Germany and Portugal (on the northern border of DSWA) had been heavily criticized within the Germany colonial lobby. Their agreement blocked further expansion northeast where resources (natural and human) were believed to be in abundance.²⁶ Streitwolf concluded soon after that the potential of the Caprivi *Zipfel* lay in its human population which he estimated to be between 10 000 and 12 000 in 1909 but that the carrying capacity of the land was at least 100 000 people. Even though the leading newspaper of the time described the territory as a 'labour recruitment district', no concrete plans for commercial exploitation were made.²⁷

Scouting for labour recruits in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* by agents of organized labour dates back to 1909. In that year, Streitwolf encountered British agents of the Labour Agent Bureau in Bulawayo (Southern Rhodesia) who had tried to recruit Fwe (Mafwe) on Germany territory. Von Frankenberg reported in 1911 that he had encountered a British agent

²² Bertrand, A., *The Kingdom of the Barotse*, T. Fischer Unwin, 1899, pp.274, 276.

²³ Pretorius, 1975, p. 37. See also Clay, G., *Your Friend, Lewanika*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1968, pp. 140-141.

²⁴ Matjila, Andrew N., 'LuSouth Africata Traditional Festival of the Mafwe People', in *New Era*, 29 September 2006.

²⁵ Zeller describes it as a 'by-product' in the course of a far more important exchange of territory (2000, p. 35).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Zeller 2000, p. 38, referring to the DSWAZ newspaper of 1911, No 100.

who had recruited Mbukushu in western Caprivi for work on the South African mines.²⁸ The earliest recorded formal request to recruit labourers for mine work from the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* dates back to March 1928.²⁹ In a letter addressed to the Government of the Bechuanaland Protectorate under whose administration the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* fell at the time, the recently established Northern Labour Organization (NLO) requested permission to recruit labourers from the territory for mine work and other industries in SWA. The organization was already recruiting in the adjacent Batawana Reserve in Bechuanaland. The Secretary for SWA supported this move by adding that the NLO represented a variety of credible companies in SWA such as the Otavi Minen Gesellschaft at Tsumeb and the SWA Company at Grootfontein.³⁰

It proved difficult to find evidence to suggest that the Northern Labour Organization recruited from the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* even though it had been granted permission to do so and had in fact erected a camp on the west side of Manyeha. There is one reference to its involvement in the Caprivi found in the report: 'Caprivi *Zipfel*: Handing Over to the SWA Administration', signed by J.W. Potts, Resident Magistrate of Bechuanaland. In this report, dated 26 October 1929, the following appears:

He explained that the Administrator intended to proceed through the strip by motor transport and, if possible, to proceed to Livingstone by a route said to have been cut and blazed by Mr. Balme the representative of the Northern Labour Organization in the Caprivi Strip.³¹

It appears that Mr. Balme was established in the western and not eastern part of the Caprivi *Zipfel*. It becomes more difficult to speculate on the possible factors that inhibited the NLO from recruiting in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. One possible explanation for such inhibition could be competition between the Northern Labour Organization and the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA). This can be gleaned from a letter to the Chief Native Commissioner in Windhoek and signed by the Native Commissioner of Rundu regarding the transfer of the Western Caprivi *Zipfel* to the Union Native Affairs Department, from which I quote in length:

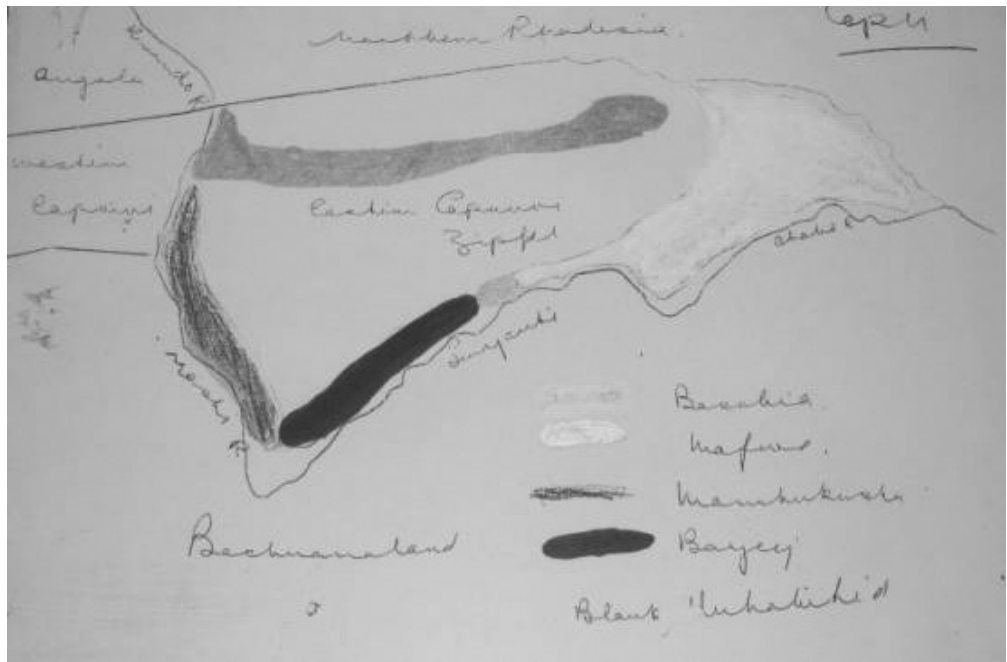
²⁸ Zeller, 2000: p. 40. He cites Fisch, 1999, pp. 108, 126.

²⁹ Kangumu, B, 2000, p. 73. Kruger believes the date to be 1927.

³⁰ Letter from the Secretary for SWA to the Government Secretary of Bechuanaland Protectorate dated 2 March 1928 and one from the Managing Secretary of the Northern Labour Association to the same dated 9 March 1928 (in Kangumu, B., *ibid.*).

³¹ The Administrator, Mr. Werth and his party, were advised not to take this route because the spoor cut by Mr. Balme in 1929 passed through Angola for the greater part of the way. Instead, they attempted to traverse the Western strip from Bagani to Bwabwata Police camp on the Portuguese border and thence to the Mashi River.

The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association is at present getting numbers of recruits from the Portuguese portion of the Okavango area, and these are sent to the Rand via the long and expensive route – Mohebo, Shakowe (Shakawe), Maun and Francistown ... It would ... simplify matters for the administration if the portion of the Western Caprivi Zipfel east of Beacon No. 5 was handed over to the Union Government. In this event the WNLA may obtain permission to establish a recruiting depot anywhere in the Western Caprivi Zipfel, and it will then become a much closer competitor to the Northern Labour Organization, which has the recruiting 'rights' in the Portuguese portion of the Okavango area, and a recruiting Concession in the Okavango Native Territory. WNLA, if established on or near the Okavango River, should come to a working arrangement with the Northern Labour Organization in regard to the division, exchange etc. of recruits from western and southeastern Angola. If this is not done, the labour supply for SWA from Angola will perhaps become seriously affected because it could all be diverted to the Rand.³²



Map 4: Sketch map hand-drawn by Native Commissioner A.B. Colenbrander for Caprivi (1953 -61) on 8 November 1954 showing distribution of tribal groups in eastern Caprivi

It is clear from the above that the WNLA and the NLO were in direct competition for the potential labour from the Portuguese portion of the Okavango area. The idea of transfer-

³² Dated 18 November 1942 (Manuscript, NAP).

ring a portion of the Western Caprivi *Zipfel* to the Union Department (Gemmill of WNLA's proposal) aimed to provide the company with facilities in western Caprivi. This can be seen in a letter Gemmill wrote to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 'The Caprivi Strip in Relation to the Native Labour Supply of the Union':

On the Western Caprivi side the flow of Angola natives through the strip to Mohembo, the WNLA station in Northern Bechuanaland, situated at the point where the Okavango River enters Bechuanaland, is rapidly increasing and within four years has grown to as much as 1, 000 per month. This route is greatly favoured by the Angolans, and a very large output through it is to be expected, but so long as the Western Caprivi remains under the SWA control, the position is insecure, and it is therefore most desirable that the Western Strip, like the Eastern, should be administered by the Union Government.³³

Such a facility would have changed the route taken by the WNLA's migrant labourers destined for the Rand. William Gemmill's idea was to convey his recruits over the much shorter and less expensive route i.e. through the western and eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* on the military road to Katima Mulilo, and from there down the Zambezi River by barge to Kazungula.³⁴ As regards to the remoteness of this route, Gemmill replied:

It is true that the conditions for road communication between the Eastern and Western Strips are bad, but just as WNLA has made a road from Katima Mulilo in the Eastern Strip to the Cuando (Kwando) River, so a road could be made through the Western Strip from the Kwando to the Okavango. In any case, air transport will make communications easy. The probable administrative scheme would be a Union Headquarters at Katima Mulilo, with subordinate administrative stations at the Cuando and at Andara, on the Okavango. The extra cost of this could be recovered by the imposition of a small travelling pass fee on the WNLA output.³⁵

The WNLA's fight for a monopoly of labour over the Caprivi frontier was a concern for the authorities especially since it involved a transfer of administrative powers. Not certain how to proceed, Mr. D.L. Smit wrote to Mr. Forsyth (SWAA) to solicit his views before formally engaging the SWAA: 'It is not quite clear in my mind why Gemmill should be so anxious that we should take over this additional territory. Can you throw any light on this aspect of the matter?'³⁶ In a scathing and almost personal reply, Mr. Forsyth replied on 22 October 1942 in a letter that is³⁷ quoted here at length:

³³ Dated 19 October 1944 (Manuscript, NAP).

³⁴ Native Commissioner (Rundu) to Chief Native Commissioner (Windhoek), dated 18 November 1942, p. 2.

³⁵ Gemmill to Union Secretary for Native Affairs, dated 19 October 1944 (Manuscript, NAP).

³⁶ D.L. Smit to Mr. Forsyth, dated 19 October 1942 (Manuscript, NAP).

³⁷ Manuscript, NAP.

It is with much surprise and some amusement that I learn of Gemmill's proposal. We always had the sneaking suspicion that when he declined to take through the Northern Labour Organization at Grootfontein the surplus labour from Ovamboland, the Okavango and Angola, it was because he wished to take the stream of Angola labour which we in SWA had created by dint of hard work over a long period and much judicious expenditure. We felt that he would sooner or later endeavour to get into closer contact with Angola and now he seems to be attempting to do so. If he could have a station closer to Runtu (Rundu) things would, of course, be much easier for the WNLA. However, from the purely labour aspect the question seems to be 'How can the Angolan labour be used to the best advantage from all points of view?'

The WNLA's eagerness for the Angolan market could partly be explained by the legal obstacles to their recruitment of SWA 'natives'. This was reserved for the mines and industries in the country. The WNLA had previously recruited migrant labourers in SWA, from both the central and northern areas. Migrant workers would either travel from Gobabis through Ghanzi to Maun and Nata³⁸ and from there to Francistown. The alternative route was from Oshikango through Ondangwa, Tsumeb, and Grootfontein to Karakuise and on to Maun, Nata and on to Francistown. The third route was from Oshikango to Runtu (Rundu), Andara, Mohembo, Shakawe through Maun, and Nata to Francistown. Migrant workers who undertook the last route did so mainly to evade the authorities determined to prevent them from enlisting for the Rand mines. In most cases they paraded as Angolan nationals to be accepted by the WNLA. This aspect was highlighted by the WNLA in their communication to the Secretary for Native Affairs titled 'Natives from South West Africa':

I have the honour to refer to certain discussions which have taken place between your Department, the South West Africa Administration and this Association, in regard to the engagement by the Association of South West Africa natives for employment on the Witwatersrand gold mines. ... As the result of these discussions it has been agreed that, provided the SWAA places no obstacles to the passage across the Caprivi Strip of ANGOLA, natives on their way to Mohembo, the Association, on its part, will do everything in its power to ensure that no native resident in the Territory of South West Africa shall be engaged by it. The arrangement is to come into force as from 1st January 1940, and in the meantime no active steps will be taken by the Association to attract South West Africa natives to Mohembo. The practical difficulties associated with the restriction are recognized by all concerned. It may not be always possible for the Association to avoid the engagement of a native from South West Africa who purports to be a native from Angola, but the Association will do everything in its power to exclude South West Africa natives from engagement.

³⁸ For the Basubiya (Bekuhane) of Botswana, Nata is supposed to be Nanta, meaning finish or boundary. It marked the end of the southern boundary of their pre-colonial Kingdom of Itenge.

On the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* side, WNLA reception depots were established in adjacent territories before the territory of Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was taken over by the Union Government. These were situated at Katima Mulilo in Northern Rhodesia across the border at a place with the same name and another at Kazungula in Bechuanaland at the confluence of the Chobe and the Zambezi rivers. The existence of these stations depended on the goodwill of Northern Rhodesia and the Bechuanaland Protectorate. In the event of interference by those governments, the WNLA was conscious that a station in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* could replace these with quite satisfactory results. The government of Northern Rhodesia suspended the WNLA from recruiting people in Barotseland and operating on its territory in 1942 or 1943.³⁹ Recruits from those areas, however, continued to be engaged by WNLA by travelling to the station at Kazungula.

As a replacement for the recruitment station in Northern Rhodesia, the Association simply moved their station to Katima Mulilo in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. Migrant labourers from Barotseland, Angola and beyond⁴⁰ could thus cross into Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* for recruitment by the WNLA. The total number of migrant labourers from this region was put at 6,000 per annum in 1944 and was steadily increasing.⁴¹ From the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, Kruger estimates a monthly average of 30 in 1962.⁴² However, by 1975, Pretorius records a figure of 300 per annum⁴³, i.e. about 25 per month. The slight drop can be attributed to two factors: the Zambianization policy implemented at independence rendered it difficult for people from the Eastern Caprivi Strip to find employment in that country and secondly, job opportunities through government driven projects in the Eastern Caprivi Strip increased.

It was difficult to employ 'non-Strip natives' or 'alien natives', as they were differently called, because the administration required employers to reverse the trend of preferring the latter to the locals. Still, in 1975 about 4% of the total population of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* (1000 males) was estimated to be outside the territory on migrant work at any given time though the actual figure could ultimately be higher.⁴⁴ The strategic location of the

³⁹ Recruitment was suspended probably owing to local demand for labour for the war effort. The suspension was for two years only.

⁴⁰ There is evidence showing that the WNLA recruited from as far afield as the Congo. See, for example: Masambachime, M.C., 'Bantu Ba Anglais: The Function and Role of Northern Rhodesian (Zambian) Workers in Katanga (Shaba) from 1911-1940', Paper presented at the School of Education, University of Zambia, October 1992.

⁴¹ Gemmill to Secretary: Native Affairs, dated 19 October 1944 (Manuscript, NAP).

⁴² Kruger, C.E., 'History of Caprivi Strip', Chapt. 9, p. 10 (NAN, A472).

⁴³ Pretorius, 1975, p. 11.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Caprivi *Zipfel* as a frontier for recruiting migrant labourers from Angola put the WNLA at loggerheads with another potential competitor, the Government of Southern Rhodesia. The latter requested the Union Government in 1945 to grant it the lease of land in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* to establish a labourers' rest camp; it was already running a similar site in Northern Rhodesia. The site requested was about seven acres, an increase from the initial one-acre site. The WNLA and the Gold Producers' Committee fiercely protested against this move, arguing that the Government of Southern Rhodesia wanted to preserve the labour resources of the Northern Territories for its exclusive use and that their attempt to lease a site in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was another link in the chain to prevent such labour reaching the Union.⁴⁵ They particularly stressed that the Government of Southern Rhodesia in the meantime had cordoned off its border with the Union to make it difficult for labourers from Southern Rhodesia to be engaged on the Rand. The Union Government sought legal advice in this matter. No legal grounds to deny the Government of Southern Rhodesia the right to lease a site in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* could be established.

Even though the above site was granted, there are no records to indicate that it was taken up, nor could reasons preventing this from happening be conclusively established. One factor was probably the labour standoff existing at the time between the Government of Southern Rhodesia and the Portuguese Government.⁴⁶ The two governments entered into an agreement in 1934 whereby the Southern Rhodesia Government was to recruit 15,000 labourers from Portuguese East Africa. About 75,000 were clandestinely recruited from the area. When the Government of Southern Rhodesia asked the Portuguese for a recruiting station in Portuguese East Africa, the latter demanded that the clandestine recruits first be returned.⁴⁷

For Northern and Southern Rhodesia, the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was more than just a conduit (frontier) for labour. Legislators in the Legislative Council of Northern Rhodesia perceived the Caprivi *Zipfel* as that country's link to the west coast. This was a reversal of the earlier position of the colonial lobby in relation to the Germans, who considered the Caprivi *Zipfel* their link from West to East Africa. A motion brought by a Mr. C.S. Knight was introduced and discussed as far back as 1932. This proposed that the Caprivi Strip be incorporated into Rhodesia, and extended to the western ocean. It was believed that this could happen in the event of the amalgamation of the two Rhodesias, which could not af-

⁴⁵ Letter from the General Manager of WNLA to the Secretary for Native Affairs dated 28 April 1947 (Manuscript, NAP).

⁴⁶ Kangumu, B., 2000, p. 74.

⁴⁷ Letter from the Dept Native Affairs to the Secretary to the Prime Minister, dated 07 May 1947 (Manuscript, NAP).

ford to depend on outlets (port facilities) controlled by other powers. Mr. Knight expressed the undesirability of the Walvis Bay route as it ran through barren country. The idea was to establish a port at the mouth of the Kunene River. He described the obtaining of a port as a duty to themselves and to posterity - except that his 'posterity' failed to include the people who occupied the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. According to the lawmaker '...there was no white population on that Strip, and the natives comprised only a few nomads, so that no injustice would be done anybody'.⁴⁸

Another member of the Legislative Council, a Mr. Kennedy Harris, supported the motion. However nothing seems to have come from this motion beyond the deliberations in the Legislative Council. The issue resurfaced again in June 1951 in the House of Assembly through a Mr. H. Eastwood, a Labour member for the Bulawayo District, who urged: 'The Caprivi Strip was a no-man's-land and the Government of Southern Rhodesia should stake a claim to it immediately'.⁴⁹

Having outlined in detail the nature of frontier labour disputes involving the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* and argued that the market was Angola, it might be logical to examine the nature of the Angolan market and the benefits that accrued from migrant labour. Angola was one of the relatively densely populated countries in Southern Africa at this time. The total population of Angola was estimated to be well over three million and the area with which the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* formed a sought after frontier was estimated to contain about 1,600,000 people. About 400,000 male adults could thus be directly procured from this area through the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*.⁵⁰ The WNLA planned to extract a total output of 40,000 migrant workers per annum from this area.

For the local economies migrant labour was a source of income for most families. Labourers were subjected to compulsory deferred pay and repatriation at the completion of their period of service. 'Every labourer returned from the mines with about £10 cash besides goods'.⁵¹ For the young men it was adventure and prestige, a chance to acquire wealth, particularly bride-wealth. Since they would become migrant labourers to get money for lobola, migrant labour turned into a form of initiation, a preparation for marriage and therefore manhood. Of course there were other social impacts such as societal breakdown when men go away leaving their households in the care of their wives.⁵²

⁴⁸ *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, Saturday 24 December, 1932.

⁴⁹ SAPA, June 1951.

⁵⁰ Letter from Gemmill of WNLA to Secretary for Native Affairs dated 19 October 1944 (manuscript, NAP).

⁵¹ Kangumu, B., 2000, p.74.

⁵² For a detailed discussion on the social impact of migrant labor on northern Namibia, see Ndeutala Angolo Hishongwa, *The Contract Labor System in Northern Namibia*.

Infrastructure development was another contribution that the WNLA made to the economy of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, especially the making of roads. To appreciate the pioneering work of the WNLA in this respect, the following quotation about transport facilities in Katima Mulilo in 1939 will suffice:

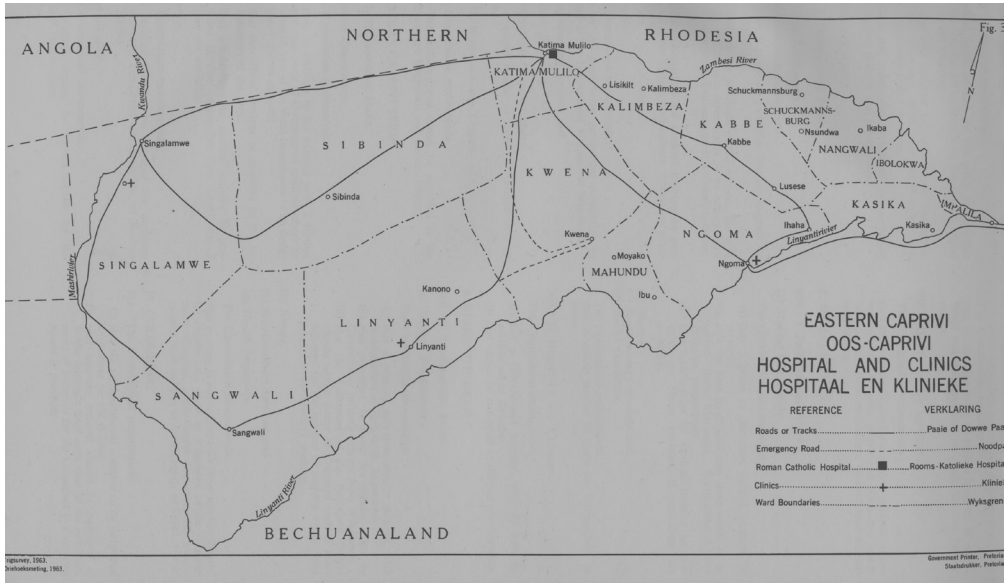
The transport available to the officials included, on land, a scotch cart drawn by oxen and two mules for riding and by river, a barge paddled by a crew of 12 to 14 men and a small out-board boat that was mostly used for occasional nearby trips. There were no roads at this stage apart from sledge tracks and footpaths and indeed no motor vehicles, these being introduced only in 1940 by the Special Company of Native Military Corps that was formed in the Caprivi Strip after the outbreak of the Second World War.⁵³

The WNLA was instrumental in making the road from Katima Mulilo to Kwando linking eastern and western Caprivi, another from the Northern Rhodesia border bypassing Katima Mulilo headquarters to their depot near Namwi Island. They also surveyed a road linking Katima Mulilo with the pontoon service at Mahundu near Luhofu (now Ibbu), which was then the crossing point into Bechuanaland before the construction of the Ngoma Bridge. A classic example of the WNLA's transnational engagement is the Katima Mulilo-Singalamwe road, ending at Manyeha crossing (now Kongola Bridge). This road ran along the surveyed northern boundary with Northern Rhodesia and at some points ran into Northern Rhodesia and the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* – an international road indeed. The government of Northern Rhodesia expressed concern about this transgression, although not very vociferously. Both parties accepted this as inevitable because the WNLA was involved in both countries and probably because this road acted as a firebreak for both territories.

Since motor transport was certainly not to be relied on at the best of times, the WNLA river transport was crucial in the development of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. To reach the outside world a person travelling from Katima Mulilo would travel by barge/boat to Kazungula, from there by road through Kachikau, Nunga, Nata, Francistown, Palapye and on to Pretoria or, alternatively, through Kachikau, Maun, Palapye and then Pretoria. The other route would run from Kazungula to Livingstone then by rail through Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia and then from Francistown to Pretoria. An even easier way to travel was by airplane on the weekly (at times bi-weekly) WNLA flights from Katima Mulilo to Francistown and Pretoria. An airstrip made by Jack Ashwin of WNLA had existed at Katima Mulilo since the beginning of World War II. According to Zeller and Kangumu, 'it became the most important direct traffic link to both South Africa and SWA and was also used for military and

⁵³ C.E. Kruger, In Kangumu, B., 2000, p. 64.

air training exercises by the SADF and SAAF. Both goods and people, including migrant labourers to the Rand mines, were transported to and from Caprivi by air'.⁵⁴



Map 5: Medical Services in 1963

In concluding this section on frontier labour migrancy, it is important to reiterate the view expressed above of the influence these transport systems had on identity formation. The routes for migrant labour from the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* faced north, east and south. The Eastern Caprivi therefore developed in a peripheral enclosure. Its outside interaction pointed away from SWA of which politically it was an integral component, to neighbouring territories of which, geographically, it was an essential component. These countries were conscious of South Africa's administrative control of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, even though the Caprivi was a long way away from the administrative centre. When residents 'went' away on migrant work, they had to return (as there was compulsory repatriation upon the expiration of a contract) to the Caprivi. It is argued here that migrant labour through the Northern Labour Organization to other parts of SWA was a missed opportunity to instill in 'Caprivians' a sense of SWA 'national' identity at that early stage of the country's development. While the apartheid policy of fragmentation would have required migrant workers from the Caprivi to 'come back', the situation would have turned out differently for e.g. that of former President

⁵⁴ Zeller & Kangumu, 2006b, p.6.

Sam Nujoma, a nationalist, meeting a person from the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* for the first time in 1964, that is 74 years after the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was appended to DSWA - in the person of fellow nationalist Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye.⁵⁵

Military Frontier as an Aspect of Caprivianness

The death of two South African policemen on the border between Caprivi and Zambia must bring to every thinking person in this economically prosperous country the shocking realization that the Republic is involved in a *Titanic struggle* [my emphasis]. The next few years may prove to be decisive for our country's future and the survival of Whites in Southern Africa.

So declared the influential government mouthpiece – *Die Vaderland*.⁵⁶ This comment came in the wake of the widespread landmine explosions in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* that began in 1971 and were blamed on PLAN, SWAPO's military wing. Two points are clear in the above quotation. The war of liberation in Namibia, as elsewhere in southern Africa, had strong international foreign policy dimensions, which pitted the then two superpowers, the Soviet Union and USA, against each other in Africa during the cold war. For apartheid South Africa and her apologists, SWAPO and other nationalist movements were just 'communist-cum-Soviet Trojan horses'. Thus South Africa presented herself as an 'anti-communist bulwark and bastion of *white* Western values'.⁵⁷ For the USA and its allies, Soviet expansionism and communism were greater evils compared with apartheid.

With the fall of the Portuguese regime in Angola and Mozambique precipitated by the 1974 *coup d'etat* in Portugal and world wide advances against imperialism in Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea (Cambodia), the USA was forced to abandon its earlier policy towards southern Africa. As recommended by the National Security Study Memorandum 39 (NSSM39, undated), the orthodox view in the American Government had been that 'whites are here [in southern Africa] to stay and the only way that constructive engagement can come about is through them. There is no hope for the blacks to gain the political rights they seek through violence, which will only lead to chaos and increased opportunities for the communists'.⁵⁸ What needed to be done, and soon, was at least to delay the transition to majority rule in South Africa and install neo-colonialist regimes in neighboring

⁵⁵ Nujoma, Sam, 2001, p. 136.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Katjavivi, 1986, p. 268.

⁵⁷ Moleah, 1983, p. 260.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

territories. As Moleah tells us: 'imperialism found itself not only on the defensive but on the run.'⁵⁹

Secondly, the above quotation puts the Caprivi Strip at the centre of South Africa's growing confrontation with advancing 'Black Africa'; 'the Eastern Caprivi Strip is our frontline...' declared the *Johannesburg Star*.⁶⁰

It is this perception of the Caprivi Strip as a 'frontline', which is the focus in this section. The section will trace a strategic shift in the perception of the territory from a useless corridor to a useful one,⁶¹ 'with far greater political significance than the German Chancellor could ever have foreseen.'⁶² Due to its wide frontage with Angola and the convergence of Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Namibia, the Caprivi Strip was described by *Uniform*, the newspaper of the South African Army, as the '...most sensitive point of South Africa's finger in Africa.'⁶³ For apartheid South Africa, the Caprivi Strip was a first line of defence against the advance of Black Africa, a training base for her military forces as well as a springboard for attack and destabilization against the frontline states. Brigadier HJ Zinn of the SADF provides an even more accurate description when he accompanied the Minister of Defence to the Eastern Caprivi Strip in 1954. In a special article written for *Kommando* (September 1954, p. 6),⁶⁴ Zinn described the Caprivi Strip as an important 'launch-pad and shock absorber in case of unrest/attack in surrounding areas which has a totally different landscape than that of the Union.'

For Black Africa, the Caprivi *Zipfel* is 'Freedom Alley', Ian Forsyth wrote in the *Cape Times*. He continued: 'Strategically, this narrow finger is today one of the most significant areas in the whole of Africa. For the terrorist, whether he is based in Zambia, Angola, or even Northern Botswana, it represents a soft underbelly which might be waiting to be hit hard.'⁶⁵ This small finger or corridor became one of the most heavily militarized areas in the whole of Southern Africa, basically, a military frontier.

It would be far-fetched to argue that the above military strategic shift can be traced back to World War I. Even though there were people in the territory who served in this war, this was not peculiar to the Caprivi *Zipfel*. What is peculiar, though, is that the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, apart from being the first German loss of territory in World War One and the first

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁶⁰ In Vigne, Randolph, *A dwelling place of our own*, 1973, p. 32.

⁶¹ Kangumu, B., 2000.

⁶² Forsyth, Ian, 'Significant Corridor: A close-up look at the Caprivi Strip', *Cape Times* [Undated].

⁶³ *Uniform*, No. 91, March/April 1983.

⁶⁴ Another SADF Magazine.

⁶⁵ Ian Forsyth, *Ibid.*, op.cit.

Allied occupation of enemy territory in the war, was administered continuously as a military/police state right up to the outbreak of World War Two. At the outbreak of World War One British troops from Southern Rhodesia collected at Sesheke (Northern Rhodesia) and formally took control of Schuckmansburg, the German post in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. The German resident surrendered without a fight on 21 September 1914. It is reported that he was arrested and removed from office – ‘ironically while enjoying a cup of tea with his counterpart, the Northern Rhodesia Commissioner at Sesheke.’⁶⁶



Figure 8: South African military helicopter surveillance of Caprivi

A police post under the Bechuanaland authorities was established at Schuckmansburg to administer affairs in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* while various outposts were created for the Western Caprivi. In 1929 the SWAA resumed control of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, again through police superintendents. The first was Superintendent W.S. Chadwick, the

⁶⁶ See Fosse, J.L., 1996, p. 71, who quotes from Curson, 1947:124. Apparently while they were at the table, the host was called to receive an urgent message, which was simply: the two nations were at war.

hunter and writer,⁶⁷ who stayed for a few months to be replaced by Sergeant E.P. Brittz who remained the sole European official in the area until 1 August 1939 when the Union Department of Native Affairs took over. On 25 October 1939, Mr. L.F.W. Trollope assumed duty as Magistrate and Native Commissioner with Mr. C.E. Kruger as his assistant in both capacities.

Their roles would soon include a military function. Shortly after the outbreak of World War Two a Special Company of the 'Native Military Corps' was formed in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. Its main purpose was to protect the Victoria Falls Bridge connecting the two Rhodesias, The Allied Forces anticipated the Bridge would be a strategic enemy target in World War Two. Mr. Trollope was appointed Commanding Officer with the rank of Captain and Mr. Kruger Second in Command with the rank of Lieutenant. The European members were, Lieutenant L.D. Thompson, 2nd Lieutenants H.H.L. Smuts, A.W. Leppan, J.M. Whittle, Warrant Officer E.S. Edminson, Staff Sergeants H.E.F. Hillebrand, V.P. Barrell, E.M. Bassingthwaite, J.A. Smuts, A.J. Potgieter, H.J.H. Stewart, P. Hansmeyer and J.M. van Helsdingent. Some of the 'Caprivian' non-commissioned officers were sent on courses to the Union. The courses were mainly in 'driving' and 'first aid and hygiene'. European members attended courses at Voortrekkerhoogte and Zonderwater from time to time.

Not much activity took place during the war period in the area surrounding the Caprivi *Zipfel*. The military company was kept busy improving the east-west landing strip made by Superintendent Brittz at Katima Mulilo, widening sledge tracks to allow their use by motor transport and the clearing of the Northern Rhodesia-Caprivi boundary 'cut-line' (from the Katima Mulilo rapids to the Mashu River) of swamps and bushes. The intelligence section covered neighbouring territories and carried out reconnaissance surveys in the territory to determine the character of the country and road systems. Meteorological observations were taken daily and passed to the SAAF Meteorological Section by radio on call sign ZUBC. The military company was disbanded in 1943.

The late 1940s to the 1950s were relatively quiet on the military front in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. There was however, increased utilization of the airstrip by the SADF and SAAF for military and air training manoeuvres, as well as for border patrols. In fact, these training exercises were part of a scheme for air training in South Africa, which began as far back as 1937.⁶⁸ The scheme was greatly expanded after the outbreak of the war when the United Kingdom was offered facilities for training RAF aircrews in South Africa. Schools were immediately opened in South Africa at Baragwanath, Randfontein, Kimberley, East

⁶⁷ The writer of *Big Game Stories*

⁶⁸ *Year Book*, Article, No. 23, 1946-Chapt. XXIX, p. 12 (South African Military Archives, 11WH, Civil, 169).

London, Oudshoorn, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. At its peak 36 Air Schools had been established necessitating the building of new airfields with extensive hangar and housing facilities. By 31 December 1945, 33,347 men had been trained as pilots, observers, navigators, bomb-aimers and air-gunners. Of these 20,800 were RAF, 12,221 were SAAF and 326 Allied personnel.⁶⁹ Plans to build a Tropical Military Training School in the Caprivi *Zipfel* were accelerated in the 1950s, this being the only territory under Union control where soldiers could train under tropical conditions. This culminated in a visit by Mr. F.C. Erasmus, Minister of Defence, the Chief of Staff, and the Under-Secretary for Defence to the area in 1954 for discussions. Writing in the same year the Magistrate and Commissioner at the time, A.B. Colenbrander, urged the development of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, adding: 'There is no question of its strategic and tactical value in time of war in my mind.'⁷⁰

A police post was established at Katima Mulilo in 1961 with responsibility for border patrols and counter-insurgency. It consisted of a dwelling house, an office with single quarters under the same roof, a store, garage, and one or two cells for detaining wrongdoers. It was manned by two white personnel,⁷¹ a sergeant and a constable and was assisted by four or five black units.

Two developments in the international arena in the 1960s had a significant bearing on the future of the Caprivi and the continuing development of a sense of 'Caprivianness'. One was the formation of the OAU (Organization of African Unity), the other the outcome of the ICJ (International Court of Justice) case against South Africa in respect of its South West African responsibilities. The formation of the OAU Liberation Committee was a signal, at least in principle, that independent African states would not stand idle while the rest of Africa was remained colonized. It was a source of great inspiration. While SWAPO believed the ICJ ruling would be in its favour, military training of PLAN combatants, which had begun in 1962, continued.⁷² The ICJ's announcement came on 18 July 1966 stating that it had no power to decide on the matter. SWAPO was extremely disappointed and the PLAN combatants, who had by this time set up camp in Northern Namibia, immediately launched the armed struggle on 26 August 1966. In a statement released the same day SWAPO announced its preparedness to take up arms, thereby acceding to the OAU's Liberation Committee's pre-condition for assistance: 'We have no alternative but to rise in arms and bring our own liberation. The supreme test must be faced and we must at once begin to cross the

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ In a letter to the Secretary for Native Affairs, dated 20 December 1954 (Manuscript, NAN).

⁷¹ Sergeant F.P. Hartman and Constable Sakkie Bosman. Constable Bosman later married Hartman's daughter, Susan.

⁷² Shityuwete, H., *Never Follow the Wolf*, 1990, p. 96.

many rivers of blood on our march towards freedom...'.⁷³ The launch of the armed struggle can be interpreted as having its immediate origin in the negative judgment of the ICJ.⁷⁴ This is strongly reflected in a SWAPO publication of 1968:

As long as we waited for the judgment at the ICJ in The Hague, the training of fighters was a precaution rather than a direct preparation for immediate action ... We hoped the outcome of the case would be in our favor. As long as we had that hope, we did not want to resort to violent methods. However, the judgment let us down, and what we had prepared for as a kind of unreality, suddenly became the cold and hard reality for us. We took to arms, we had no other choice.⁷⁵

While accepting the ICJ failure as the critical reason for taking up arms, SWAPO was generally disillusioned with the UN for its failure to take immediate action against South Africa. A shift away from petitioning as a tool was in the offing. As early as 1963, Sam Nujoma, president of SWAPO, wrote to Andimba Herman Toivo ja Toivo expressing his displeasure with the UN and the failure of petitioning:

During my stay ... in Dar-es-Salaam I petitioned the UN many times. When nothing happened it dawned on me that the freedom of our country will never come about through peaceful means ...⁷⁶

The Caprivi Strip was the area of occupied SWA that was closest to PLAN's Kongwa camp in Tanzania, for Angola was still occupied by the Portuguese at the time of the launch of the armed struggle in 1966. The territory thus inevitably played a central role in the development and formative years of the armed struggle. PLAN established contacts in the territory, a process made easier by the 1964 merger between CANU and SWAPO. Helao Shityuwete, a member of one of the first groups that passed through the Caprivi Strip, writes in his autobiography of Joseph Nawa who met them on the border and whom they briefed concerning their mission.⁷⁷ To win the support and confidence of the locals was vital in guerrilla warfare. PLAN combatants were to acquaint themselves with the terrain and identify enemy troop movements while disguised as civilians. In this way they would stay for longer periods in the country without being detected. Of course logistically, this was also advantageous as the fighters went into the field with only what they could carry and bearing light arms, since their bases were far removed from the operational zone. They relied on the locals for

⁷³ Quoted in Vigne, R., *Op.cit.*, 1973, p. 29.

⁷⁴ See Katjavivi, P., 'The rise of nationalism in Namibia and its international dimensions', p. 263 (D.Phil, Oxford, 1986).

⁷⁵ *Namibia News*, (London) 6-7, 1968, p. 1.

⁷⁶ Shay, R. & Vermaak, C., *The Silent War*, 1971, p. 160.

⁷⁷ Shityuwete, H., *Never follow the wolf*, 1990, p. 106.

food, water and other necessities, assistance, which SWAPO acknowledges, was forthcoming.⁷⁸ What this required from the combatants was a gun in one hand and a manifesto in another. This was in line with the stated principle of the movement that 'it is politics that leads the gun.'⁷⁹ PLAN combatants were effective armed political militants. The following is an account by the South African Minister of Police issued in October 1968 about 'a new threat' on Namibia's northern borders, where literally hundreds of trained men were waiting to enter the country:

They were using new tactics. In the past, men had crossed the border heavily armed, using their weapons to terrorize the local inhabitants. Now they were coming unarmed, avoiding clashes with the police, and attempting to influence chiefs and others to cooperate with them.⁸⁰

This support for the combatants by the locals in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* led to brutal police reprisals culminating in the October 1968 Singalamwe massacre discussed in detail in chapter seven. About sixty-three people were killed and hundreds rounded up for interrogation and torture. Scores fled into neighbouring territories, many, especially children, dying en route.

A much heavier blow was dealt to PLAN⁸¹ on 18 May 1967 when Tobias Hainyeko, its first commander, was killed on the Zambezi River by the South African Police (SAP) while drawing their fire in order to allow the guerrilla party he was leading to cross the Zambezi river into the Caprivi in safety. He was engaged against two SAP officers – Warrant Officer P. Grobler and Constable A. Jacobs who were accompanied by an African Constable K.L. Chaka. Warrant Officer Grobler and Constable Chaka were badly wounded from Hainyeko's bullets and were immediately removed by helicopter to a military hospital near Pretoria. They were presented with the SAP Star for Distinguished Service, the SAP's second highest decoration. This account, however, is contrary to Sam Nujoma's version. He contends that Hainyeko shot dead Grobler and wounded another who later succumbed from his injuries.⁸² Nujoma's version could not be verified by any other source and it seems highly unlikely that his version could be correct. What could be established concerning the injuries is that Grobler was penetrated by a bullet in his lung and in fact it was Chaka who underwent an emergency operation. It could be that Chaka was more seriously

⁷⁸ SWAPO Department of Information and Publicity, *SWAPO Information on SWAPO: An Historical Profile*, Lusaka, July 1978, p. 16.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 October 1968, cited in South African Institute of Race Relations, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa*, 1968 (Johannesburg, SAIRR, 1969), p. 64. quoted in Katjavivi, *Ibid.*, p. 267.

⁸¹ Then known as SWALA - South West Africa Liberation Army.

⁸² Nujoma, 2001, p. 172, 179.

injured compared to his senior officer. In his book on PLAN's combat operations, Oswin Namakalu does not refer to any deaths apart from Hainyeko's, except to state that a third officer was also shot.⁸³

Tobias Hainyeko had been on a mission to investigate conditions in the Caprivi Strip to determine how to improve communications between the operational headquarters in Tanzania and PLAN's fighting units in Namibia. Peter Katjavivi, a historian and prominent member of SWAPO claims that the local manager of the Caltex Company, which operated the Zambezi River Transport, betrayed Hainyeko to the SAP.⁸⁴ However, Shityuwete, Nujoma and Namakalu allege that Hainyeko's deputy, Leonard Philemon Shuuya 'Castro', was responsible for the betrayal of the mission. Castro was apparently detained by the South Africans in February 1966 and then planted back in SWAPO as an agent.⁸⁵ Castro briefly suc-

ceeded Hainyeko until he was arrested and handed over to the Tanzanian authorities that, in Nujoma's words 'kept him away while the struggle continued.'⁸⁶ Castro was released 17 years later, and settled abroad.

PLAN's 'hit and run' tactics at this stage of the war have been described by Susan Brown.⁸⁷ From her account it can be concluded that the SADF's losses in this phase of the guerrilla



Figure 9: The Caprivi war zone: Bomb crater near Katima Mulilo caused by a 122 mm rocket fired from across the Zambezi

⁸³ Namakalu, 2004, pp. 17-18.

⁸⁴ Katjavivi, *A History of Resistance in Namibia*, 1988, p. 60.

⁸⁵ Brown, Susan, 'Diplomacy by other means' in Leys and Saul, *Namibia's liberation struggle*, 1995, p. 21.

⁸⁶ Nujoma, *ibid.*, p. 180

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-23.

war were 5 dead and 35 wounded. To this could be added the 10 dead and 10 wounded in the 23 August 1978 PLAN bombardment of Katima Mulilo. She estimates a much higher figure of casualties on PLAN's side. For example, of the two large PLAN groups that entered the Caprivi in 1968, a total of 178 were allegedly killed or captured and the remaining combatants withdrew into Zambia.⁸⁸ This however, could be only South Africa's official figure. As can be expected, a review of PLAN, SWAPO and international media sources on SADF casualties' paints a different picture as reflected in the diagram next page.

The statistics were provided by SWAPO war communiqués in its various publications, mainly the *Namibia News* (1971-1978), and could, therefore, just as easily be interpreted as that movement's war propaganda as could the SADF's statistics. On both sides there was a deliberate willingness to conceal the number of their dead. For South Africa the aim of this was to portray their frontline, the Caprivi Strip, as being under their control. The little information that was divulged was calculated as just enough to instill a sense of insecurity mainly in white South Africans who continued to endure and sacrifice their lives in this border war. Many of those reported as casualties were policemen, not members of the SADF, in isolated incidents that occurred on the Zambian border. This was to deny the fact that the SADF had been involved on this frontline during this period, and secondly, that PLAN operated from inside Zambia thereby justifying 'hot pursuits' into that country, which was a violation of its territorial integrity.

SWAPO's claim that the SADF suffered heavy casualties was mainly aimed at the international community and intended to show that the armed struggle was as effective a tool for liberation as a political or negotiated settlement.⁸⁹ Namibians, especially the youth, were encouraged to go into exile and join PLAN while creating a favourable environment for combatants to operate from inside the country and opportunity for locals to provide shelter, food, and water. If SWAPO's statistics are reliable, the generally accepted view that South Africa suffered its worst casualties up until that time during the August 1978 Katima Mulilo attack⁹⁰ is brought into question. A rundown of the above figures puts the total figure of South African deaths and casualties at 103; this does not include major attacks such as the Katima Mulilo attack, or the casualties from the two attacks on Singalamwe, etc.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Susan Brown, *op.cit.* p. 21. It is accepted given the fact that she relied on Steenkamp (see ^{n.380}) as a source of information in this regard.

⁸⁹ Saul and Leys, 1995, *The Two-Edged Sword*.

⁹⁰ See Kangumu, *Forgotten Corner of Namibia*, 2000.

⁹¹ For a discussion of major PLAN combat attacks see the book by Oswin O. Namakalu, *Armed Liberation Struggle: Some Accounts Of Plan's Combat Operations*, Windhoek: Gamsberg, 2004. One weakness of Namakalu's work is that even though his exposition is a useful catalogue of

No.	Name of battle/ attack	Place	Commander	Date	Casualties	Equipment captured	Source
1	Attack on SADF Convoy between Kongola and Libebe			2 April 1971	(Just) many		<i>Namibia News</i> , Vol. 4, No. 3-10, March-October 1971
2	Ambush of SADF Armoured car	Katima Mulilo		19 th April 1971	4 officers and 2 NCO'S Killed		
3	Landmine Explosion	Between KM And Singalawe			15 killed		<i>Namibia New</i> , vol. 4 No. 3-10 March- October 1971
4	Guerrilla Attacks			SWAPO War Communiqué- 20 October 1971	9 killed, 17 wounded		<i>Namibia News</i> , Vol. 4, No. 11-12 Nov-Dec 1971
5	Landmine explosions			22 February 1972	18 dead		Mr. B.J. van der Walt, Administrator, in <i>Daily Telegraph</i>
6	Ambush enemy Platoon	Near Kamene military base		Friday 20 April 1973	37 killed, 2 wounded and escaped	Nato weapons, Belgian made FAL, 308 and light machine guns, British made LMG's 'Bren', ammunition a radio transmitter, etc	SWAPO Communiqué No. 2 (1973), in <i>Namibia News</i> , Vol. 6, No. 5-6, May- June 1973
7	Capture of Singalamwe base	Singalamwe		9 April 1975	Many killed including two South African agents captured	Six land rovers, two trucks and five Danish radios	<i>Namibia News</i> , Vol. 8, No. 9-12 Sept-Dec 1975
8	Landmine explosion	Caprivi		15 October 1975	One		<i>Namibia News</i> , Vol. 8, Sept-Dec 1975

Table 10: Diagram showing PLAN battle encounters

The war casualties on the frontline during this period are often interpreted in terms of military personnel, installations and equipment. Hardly ever does one come across a study of the impact of the war on the civilian population and such a study is long overdue.⁹² An exception is the October 1968 Singalamwe massacre, which was reported by SWAPO in 1974 (discussed in greater detail in chapter seven).

This leads into the next aspect of the military frontier: the militarization and use of the Caprivi Strip as launching pad for attacks and for the destabilization of neighbouring states dotting the frontier line. SADF aggression and intervention in Angola and Zambia have been widely discussed.⁹³ The South African response to the escalating war against SWAPO took various forms including the complete denial of losses on the battlefield, militarization, the détente campaign to win over regional governments and the nationalization of the liberation war through the creation of the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF). The Caprivi Strip became one of the most heavily militarized areas in southern Africa at this time. On the western side, the SADF had three major army bases and two military training bases, Buffalo (also known as Bagani), Omega, Chetto and the Fort Doppies and Hippo training bases. On the eastern side of the Caprivi Strip four major bases dotted the frontier, the Mpacha airbase, Katima base, the WENELA base⁹⁴ and the Katounyana military base. In total, nine major military bases were strategically located in the Caprivi Strip. This excludes smaller bases and airfields such as those located at Bukalo and Impalila Island on the Zambezi and Chobe rivers. It was from these military facilities that South Africa trained the Reconnaissance Commandos (Recces, Special Units) and less formal units such as Koevoet, the Barotse surrogates and the Inkatha movement from KwaZulu Natal in South Africa, and launched attacks on Zambia (Operation Dingo in 1977) and Angola (Operation Reindeer, code name for the attack on Kassinga in 1978).

encounters, he is silent on casualties. This is probably due as much to a lack of accurate statistics in the 'hit-run' nature of the war as maybe a desire not to venture into the propaganda, which characterized much of this period.

⁹² My colleagues Dr. Jeremy Silvester and Ms. Martha Akawa are currently (2006) conducting research under the auspices of the Archives of Anti-Colonial Resistance and Liberation Struggle (AACRLS) examining the impact of the war on the Namibian civilian population inside Namibia. Hopefully this will address this aspect of the war in the Caprivi strip and not suffer from the usual historiographical anomaly of treating the Caprivi strip as separate from the rest of Namibia.

⁹³ See among others: Moleah, A.T., *Namibia: The Struggle for liberation* (1983), Steenkamp, *Borderstrike*, (1983), Grundy, *Soldiers without Politics* (c1983), Breytenbach, *They live by the sword* (1990), Stiff, *The silent war* (1999). For a focused discussion in relation to the Caprivi Strip, see Kangumu, B., 2000.

⁹⁴ Situated on the border between Namibia and Zambia, where the Witwatersrand Native Labor Association had their camp built as a rest camp for migrant workers.

Operation Dingo involved training a group of dissidents from Zambia's western province (Barotseland) at Fort Doppies in the Western Caprivi from 1971 to 1977. Historically, the Barotse of western Zambia regarded their area as a separate state. This was ignored by British imperial rule at its close, a state of affairs that was upheld by the nationalist government of Kenneth Kaunda. A crackdown on protesters led many to cross into Angola. Prominent among them was one Adamson Mushala,⁹⁵ who led a group for training in Caprivi that became known as the 'Mushala group'. Their training was jointly coordinated by PIDE (the Portuguese security police) who flew them into Caprivi, the Bureau for State Security (BOSS), and the Recces. The aim was to discourage Kaunda's government from offering rear bases to SWAPO and the ANC (South Africa's Af-

rican National Congress). This worked to some extent following the Detente talks between Pretoria and Lusaka, which led to the brutal sacrifice of Mushala's group.⁹⁶ One day the group was loaded into a truck by operatives of BOSS before the completion of their training, apparently to be deployed into Zambia for an urgent operation. It was later discovered



Figure 10: A PLAN soldier, Festus Naujoma, who was wounded and captured by the South African forces and then released, is here photographed in Rundu, Kavango, in 1987 with a portrait (officially banned) of SWAPO's president Sam Nujoma

⁹⁵ The link between Adamson Mushala and Barotseland secessionism is, however, not very clear. It is possible that he had little or nothing to do with Lozi secessionism since he was Kaonde and recruited in a Lunda area. It is also possible that the SASADF wished to capitalize on the existence of secession in Barotseland through utilizing their agents such as Mushala to destabilize Zambia and not necessarily to aid secession.

⁹⁶ See Stiff, *The Silent War*, 1999, p. 41.

that they were put into boats on the Zambezi. These headed across the river into the waiting arms of Zambian Defence Force members who opened fire on them. This happened while Mushala and Jan Breytenbach, their chief instructor, were away. Although they regrouped back at Fort Doppies, South Africa cut ties with the group in 1977⁹⁷ and Mushala was killed in combat against Zambian soldiers in 1982.



Figure 11: 'Underground munitions store at a South African army camp in Caprivi Strip'

Operation Reindeer was South Africa's most brutal campaign against SWAPO in Angola after its failed invasion of 1975/6, resulting in 800 dead on the 4 May 1978. SWAPO decided to reciprocate with Operation Revenge, the 23 August 1978 attack on Katima Mulilo. It appears that both the SADF and PLAN were aware that an attack by the other was imminent. While PLAN wanted to take revenge quickly, it received intelligence information that the SADF was planning an incursion into Zambia on 26 August 1978. Namakalu reports that increased reconnaissance flights and increased enemy activity on Zambian soil were observed at this time.⁹⁸ PLAN's commanders had also obtained a topsecret aerial map of all known PLAN bases marked as targets in Zambia by the SADF. These bases were evacuated,

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.42.

⁹⁸ Namakalu, 2004, 76.

and because of the SADF's 'hot-pursuits', they were not inhabited after the attack. PLAN had to strike first. From this perspective, it can be argued that Operation Revenge was indeed a pre-emptive strike. South African intelligence reported a heavy PLAN military build-up across the border and a visit to western Zambia by Sam Nujoma, the President of SWAPO, both of which were seen in South African circles as aiming to boost the morale of the soldiers before the attack.⁹⁹

The other theory linked the tour to a planned visit to those parts by Marti Ahtisaari, the newly appointed UN Commissioner for SWA. In any event, an attack on Katima Mulilo during a UN envoy visit would have given it the necessary publicity, especially at a time when the UN Security Council was about to meet and discuss the question of Namibian independence.

The following entry in the Log Book¹⁰⁰ of the Holy Family Mission at Katima Mulilo describes the 1978 attack:

The mission was awakened at 1:00 am by a fierce rocket attack by the Zambians from across the river at Sesheke. The sisters got the girls to be wrapped in their blankets under their beds and prayed with them until the attack ended at 4:30. Major du Toit and his men called at the end of the attack to see if everybody was all right. No damage was done on the mission, although some small missiles landed nearby. However, we heard next day that the bedroom where our civil-action-soldier teachers sleep was hit by a rocket and ten killed (all S.Africans) RIP. Our teachers escaped injury.

⁹⁹ Steenkamp, *Borderstrike*, 1983, p.149.

¹⁰⁰ Entry of 23rd August: Log Book of Holy Family Mission, Katima Mulilo, Caprivi Strip, SWA/Namibia, Book I, 1943 – 1994. The mission also maintains a second log book on Pius XII Girls School, which was established to enhance the attendance of the girl child in school. According to the database of the National Archives in Pretoria, an Accession (Reference A 409) of primary materials is held by the Roman Catholic Mission Katima Mulilo containing the following in one volume: Diaries of Roman Catholic Mission, Katima Mulilo, 1975-1983; Correspondence of Holy Family Mission Katima Mulilo on: Occupancy, Mafwe schools, Kuta, Hospital, 1944-1978; Notes on Katima Mulilo, 1960-1983; Manuscript: How Civic Action has helped Kizito College, 1975-1984; Extract from *Zambezi Mission: A History of the Capuchins in Zambia*, 1931-1981, on Holy Family in Caprivi, 1944-1982; and, Photographs of Roman Catholic Church, Katima Mulilo. Unfortunately, none of the above could be found during my fieldwork at the Holy Family Mission at Katima Mulilo except for the two Log Books. Father George, with whom I had discussions, maintained that he was not aware of the existence of such materials. I got the impression that their archive was not well organized. This is a real concern in Namibia where a lot of private archives are virtually unaccounted for and not usually accessible to researchers; alternatively they were not comfortable allowing me access to the required information, not that I have any particular reason why they would be distrustful.

The perception that the attack was carried out by the 'Zambians' was reinforced by the fact that it was carried out from Zambian soil.¹⁰¹ However, the attack was actually undertaken by PLAN with the knowledge of the Zambian authorities. It took place at about 01:15 am, just fifteen minutes after a routine broadcast by Radio Zambia carried a news report stating that the war against South Africa was about to intensify. This was intended to forewarn the civilian population on both sides of the Zambezi in case of a South African retaliation, which did indeed take place. There were no civilian casualties reported in the PLAN attack, which concentrated mainly on Katima and WNLA bases.

Two factors might account for this. The first was the precise planning so as not to cause civilian casualties on the part of PLAN combatants when attacking.¹⁰² Apart from the few missiles, which landed near the Holy Mission (reported above), only one other stray missile was reported to have landed in the civilian residential area of Ngweze causing damage to the primary school there, but no casualties. The second is that bunkers/bomb shelters were constructed around Kaima Mulilo (both in the White and Black sections) in anticipation of such an attack. These structures, which are largely dilapidated at present, are a vivid testimony to the strike and give Katima Mulilo the impression of being a border town on a military frontier. The day following the attack high government officials from South Africa flew to Katima Mulilo. These included General Viljoen, General Gleeson Geldenhuys and the Administrator for SWA, Judge Marthinus Steyn. The Super Felon¹⁰³ carrying them was nearly

¹⁰¹ According to Namakalu (*op.cit.*, p. 75), the original plan was to attack from Namibian soil but this was shelved as more information came in on the location of bases and the enemy's routine patrols and other observations. Another consideration was that the heavy weapons and ammunition used during the attack was carried by shoulder.

¹⁰² The impact of the attack on the civilian population is yet to be researched. It is reported that some residents of Katima Mulilo fled under cover of night and walked for miles to their villages of origin, some reaching Bukalo and Ngoma on the Namibian-Botswana border. It is told how parents left behind their children, how men wore their wives' skirts and dresses and how in the rush of the one mother picked up a pet dog thinking it was her infant child. It is not clear how Katima Mulilo was selected for Operation Revenge, in light of the fact that PLAN's theatre of war had already shifted by this time. Likando (*Op.cit.*, 1989: 149-50) briefly tells us about the 'behind the scene' planning of Operation Revenge and places it in the wider conflict (what he terms 'Owambo tribalism') between those PLAN fighters from the Caprivi and their Oshiwambo counterparts. He states that the aim was apparently to 'destroy' the town by shelling it indiscriminately and the advice to select enemy targets was perceived as treacherous. He further reports continued misunderstandings between the fighters even after the attack. These were resolved only by the intervention of the leadership. Apparently a delegation led by Albert Mishake Muyongo accompanied by Lemmy Matengu and some junior PLAN officers had to travel to the frontline to establish the veracity of the reported clashes. While dissatisfaction might have existed between the two groups, it could not be established from any other source whether this was to the extent as reported by Likando. In any case the fact that no civilian casualties were reported shows that the aim could not have been to inflict indiscriminate damage to the town.

¹⁰³ SADF aircraft.

struck by an anti-craft shell and two mortar bombs, which were fired from Sesheke.¹⁰⁴ Reinforcements were called in from South Africa and Grootfontein and the SADF, as expected, pursued PLAN fighters inside Zambia for up to a hundred kilometers north of the cut line.

Two other aspects of the military frontier in the Caprivi Strip deserve brief mention. These were the impact of the war and militarization on the South African population in West Caprivi and the Winning Hearts and Minds (WHAM) project in the Eastern Caprivi. South Africa's intention was to nationalize the war of liberation, turning Black against Black. For this reason the so-called 'Bushmen' Battalion was the first to be formed in 1974¹⁰⁵ as a unit in what was later known as SWATF (South West Africa Territorial Force). The SWATF, which was ethnically based, was spread along the operational zone. The Caprivi Strip was designated as Sector 70 of the operational zone and housed two full battalions, namely 201 Battalion ('Bushmen') at Omega and 33 Battalion,

later named 701 Battalion, at Mpacha near Katima Mulilo. The medium of instruction in the Mpacha battalion was English as opposed to Afrikaans, which was used in Omega. The South Africans (Kxoe) who fled from Angola were received in West Caprivi by the SADF in a reception camp built for them.¹⁰⁶ West Caprivi was proclaimed a nature park in 1963 and upgraded to a Game Reserve in 1968.¹⁰⁷ The area was, however, declared a South African military zone and closed to civilians before any game stocking activities could

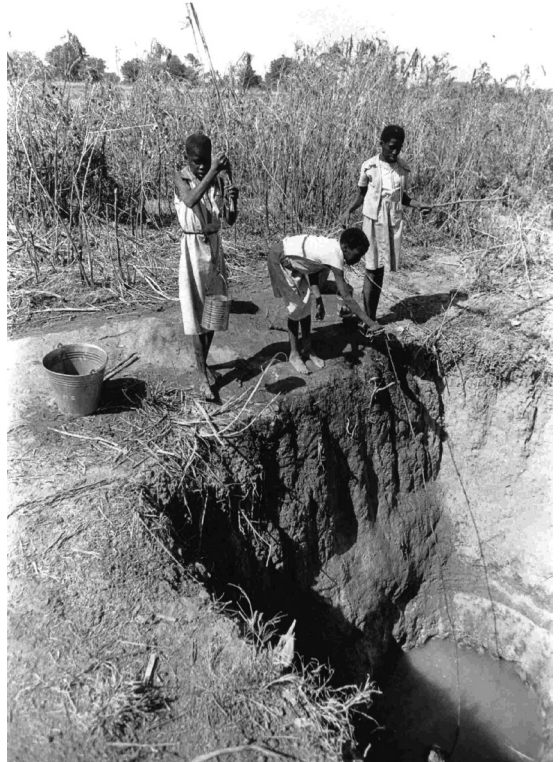


Figure 12: Daily life during the war: 'Girls fetch water from a deep waterhole, July 1987'

¹⁰⁴ Steenkamp, *Borderstrike*, 1983, p. 158.

¹⁰⁵ Moleah, *op cit* 1983, p. 268.

¹⁰⁶ Brenzinger, 'Moving to survive', in *Khoisaan Forum*, 1997, p. 30.

¹⁰⁷ Brown & Jones, *Results of a Socio-ecological Survey of the West Caprivi Strip*, 1994, p. 85.

start.¹⁰⁸ A number of South African families were forcibly removed from the Angolan border where a one-kilometer wide strip was proclaimed as a free-fire zone.¹⁰⁹ By concentrating the San in army camps, their traditional way of living that of hunting and gathering, was destroyed. They possessed one vital skill, however, badly needed by the SADF namely tracking. Sixteen South African volunteers plus one white officer and six national servicemen initially kick-started the recruitment of the Kxoe into the South African Army at the Omega base in West Caprivi.¹¹⁰ Their numbers in the army steadily increased. Eventually these formed about a thousand strong force composed entirely of San troops under white South African commanders. As trackers they moved in front of patrols and armoured vehicles often exposing themselves to landmine explosions. In short, they were used as human shields for the mainly white South African Army. Their families lived with them at the Omega base bringing the number of those involved to 5, 000 or eighty per cent of the population of West Caprivi.¹¹¹ Those who were not fit for recruitment in the army, such as women and older men, were employed as labourers, dressmakers and cooks. South Africa kept the existence of the Omega base secret until 1977 when the SADF started using it extensively for propaganda purposes as a prime example of how the army was winning the 'hearts and minds' of people. They claimed that care was taken not to westernize these San soldiers, by encouraging them to return to the bush from time to time to hone their tracking skills¹¹² in this way learning how to be 'Bushmen' again. Apart from Omega, other South African families were resettled at Fort Doppies near the Botswana border and the Chetto army base.

The Chetto Army base was also used by UNITA. The SADF used the base from 1976 to 1983 when UNITA started using it until shortly before Namibian independence.¹¹³ Contrary to South Africa's denials, the war was immensely costly in human terms. Breytenbach, a long serving SADF officer in West Caprivi writes:

It is difficult to cast my mind's eye back to the Caprivi, where I see rows and rows of white crosses, many of them marking the graves of men I had known intimately. There are hundreds of them, all identical, at the heads of little heaps of earth on which wives, children and friends used to lay bunches of indigenous flowers and personal relics from the daily lives of

¹⁰⁸ Brenzinger, 'Moving to survive', 1997, p. 30.

¹⁰⁹ World Wildlife Fund, *Report on Mbukushu Migration to Kxoe Use Areas to the East of the Okavango River*, June 1997, p. 11.

¹¹⁰ Grundy, *Soldiers without Politics*, c1983, p. 254.

¹¹¹ Committee on South African War Resistance, 'The South African military occupation of Namibia'.

¹¹² *New York Times*, 6 October 1977, p. 35; *South Africa Digest*, 28 April 1978, pp. 16-17; *Sunday Tribune*, (Durban), 19 October 1981; and *Sunday Express* (Johannesburg), 30 May 1982, p. 6.

¹¹³ Diemer, J., (1996), 'The Barakwena of the Chetto Area', in *World Wildlife Fund, op.cit.*, p. 11.

the fallen heroes. Apart from those buried at Buffalo, there are many other unmarked graves in Angola¹¹⁴

The mass exodus of young people into exile to join SWAPO in the mid to late 1970s and the PLAN advances on the battlefield forced South Africa to rethink its strategy.

Concurrently with military force, the colonial state turned its attention to the WHAM ('Winning Hearts And Minds') project.¹¹⁵ Alongside sister organizations in northern and central Namibia such as *Etango* in former Owamboland, *Ezuva* in Kavango, *Waaksaamheid en Belange Organisasie vir Namibia* in central Namibia, the Caprivi National Service or more specifically, the *Namwi Foundation* was established in Caprivi. South Africa waged its dangerous socio-psychological war in and on Namibia through these organizations. The *Namwi Foundation* was a pseudo-cultural organization founded under the wing of the SADF to promote an exclusive geographical and ethnic loyalty and to distance Namibians from SWAPO. Through cultural, sporting and religious activities, the Namwi Foundation promoted tribalism and allegiance to the 'homeland' as a scheme to further the divide and rule policy applied in the country. School goers at this time remember being taken to Nambweza near Lisikili in the Eastern Caprivi Strip basically for indoctrination encouraging a passive and negative attitude towards the liberation struggle waged by SWAPO. In later years (up to 1989), the famous annual Easter Soccer Bonanza, sponsored by the SADF in the Caprivi, was included in the *Namwi Foundation's* range of activities.

Summary

It is generally accepted that the creation of Caprivianness was a by-product of Germany's wish to have access to the Zambezi River. I have tried to show that in addition to this, Germany aspired to insert herself into the British sphere of influence where resources – both natural and human - were believed to be abundant. The Caprivi thus became the frontier bordering on unknown British territory. It was this Frontier Identity of the Caprivi, which formed the focus of this chapter. I concluded that there were many elements comprising this frontier identity. Discussion was limited to the following: refuge as an aspect of frontier identity, labour extraction as frontier identity, military frontier identity and lastly, the Caprivi as a frontier for outlaws.

¹¹⁴ Breytenbach, *They Live by the Sword*, 1990, p. 263.

¹¹⁵ This section on WHAM is adapted from an earlier newspaper article on traditional festivals in the Caprivi region written by the author, 'Andrew Matjila and Traditional Festivals in the Caprivi: The Other Side of the Coin', in *New Era*, 6 October 2006.

Refuge as an aspect of frontier identity dates back to pre-colonial times. During that period the inhabitants of what is now Caprivi moved about in order to survive, either to another part of the territory or simply across the rivers. Movement was usually away from looming danger or in search of food. The rivers that bounded the Caprivi served as a natural refuge for its inhabitants. With the advent of Lozi/Rotse subjugation, the latter regarded the Caprivi as a granary, as well as a hunting and fishing ground. In this way the Caprivi became their frontier of plenty. This, however, changed with the rise of the Mfecane/Difagane movement in the Eastern Cape (South Africa) in the 1800s. Migrating hordes under renegade generals of Shaka Zulu (Mzilikazi and Sebetwane) trekked northwards. Sebetwane's Makololo reached the Caprivi in the 1820s. He soon formed an alliance, albeit short-lived with the Subiya chief, Liswani, who helped him cross the Zambezi on his northbound journey of conquest and plunder.

Sebetwane conquered the Rotse/Aluyi/Lozi and established himself at Naliele as supreme leader in those parts, including the area that fell under Chief Liswani's influence. The Caprivi then turned into a source of danger for the Rotse. Even Sebetwane was not safe, for he feared constant harassment from Mzilikazi of the Matebele, his natural enemy. Angered by Sebetwane's actions, Chief Liswani of the Masubiya invited a contingent of Mzilikazi's army and mounted a joint attack on Sebetwane. For this act, considered treacherous by Sebetwane, Chief Liswani was invited to Naliele and killed by the Makololo. The way was then cleared for Sebetwane to establish himself at Muzumani (which he named Linyanti, today known as Sangwali) in the Caprivi, thereby recognizing it as a safe haven. Ironically, it was this safe haven that diminished the numbers of his people due to illnesses and led to their total annihilation after the death of Sebetwane.

At the close of Makololo rule (at its weakest), the Rotse recaptured the Caprivi and subjugated its people until the advent of European colonialism. Between 1890 and 1909, the Caprivi was regarded as a haven for criminals or prisoners who went into hiding and a happy hunting ground for trophy hunters because there was no official European administration in the territory. For this reason, it is argued here, it turned into an outlaw frontier during this period. It has been described as a 'no man's land'. This perception disregards the presence of the indigenous people of the Caprivi.

With the advent of European colonialism, the Caprivi became a frontier for organized labour extraction in central southern Africa. Labour agents of organizations such as the Labour Agent Bureau based in Bulawayo (Southern Rhodesia), the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) and the Northern Labour Organization (NLO, SWA) competed for recruitment rights and the setting up of recruitment camps in the Caprivi. Being sparsely populated, the Caprivi was less attractive to these labour extraction organiza-

tions than Angola, which was one of the most densely populated areas in southern Africa at the time. The Caprivi was thus described as a frontier for extracting Angolan migrant labour.

A closer look at the routes of migrant labour and road systems at the time show that the Caprivi's external interactions pointed away from SWA towards the north, east and especially south to the Rand mines. The failure of the Northern Labour Organization to hire workers from the Eastern Caprivi Strip for SWA can be seen as a missed opportunity to Namibianize the Caprivi. People from the Caprivi 'went and came back' to the Caprivi due to compulsory repatriation at the end of their service.

Further evidence pointing to Caprivi relations with territories outside SWA was the period of slavery where 'Mambaris' (people of mixed blood), especially from Angola, chained people in long lines on their way to the west coast for shipment to the Americas and occasionally to Dar es Salaam (east coast). Slavery under the Rotse/Lozi, which was just as cruel, was also discussed.

Lastly, the military frontier identity of the Caprivi Strip was discussed in great length. The Caprivi Strip was regarded by South Africa as its military frontline, which was central to the survival of whites in southern Africa. As the confrontation in southern Africa became central to the Cold War, South Africa presented her racism and apartheid as anti-communist and the country itself as a bulwark and bastion of *white western* values. As a result the Caprivi Strip became a symbolic trench, a first line of defence, a training base for South African forces (especially special units) and a springboard for attacks on and the destabilization of the countries adjacent to the frontier – the frontline states.

The military strategic importance of the Caprivi Strip was traced back to World War One when it became the first enemy territory to fall into the hands of the Allied forces. Since then it was continuously administered as a virtual 'police state'. This lasted until shortly before the outbreak of World War Two when it was transferred to Pretoria for the same strategic reasons. At the outbreak of World War Two a Company of Native Military Corps was formed in the Caprivi Strip with the purpose of protecting the Victoria Falls Bridge. The Allied forces feared the Bridge would be a natural enemy target in the war; however, the Company was disbanded in 1943 without complaint. The SADF and SAAF continued to use the Caprivi Strip for air training exercises and border patrols throughout the 1950s and plans existed at that time for the construction of a tropical military training school in the territory. A number of military installations (bases and airfields) in the Caprivi Strip were used by South Africa to conduct Operation Reindeer (Angola) and Operation Dingo (Zambia).

For black Africa and especially SWAPO, the Caprivi Strip was 'Freedom Alley'. For PLAN, SWAPO's military wing, the territory represented a soft underbelly which was waiting to

be hit hard. Indeed the Caprivi Strip was the theatre of war in the formative years of the armed liberation struggle. PLAN successfully employed hit and run tactics and mounted its monumental Operation Revenge with the 23 August 1978 Katima Mulilo bombardment.

To conclude, the chapter examined the SADF WHAM project as an alternative to military force. The SADF formed the *Namwi Foundation* in the Eastern Caprivi Strip to spearhead its dangerous socio-psychological warfare. Thus the Caprivi Strip was perceived by South Africa as a military frontier where the war was to be contained.

6 Rival Histories and Contested Caprivi Identities

The first chapters in this book established that Caprivi identities were constructed over the course of a century. These were largely influenced by the ambiguous colonial objectives that reflected the uniqueness of the place and its history. It is this uniqueness that produced these identities, which were characterized by divergent views/perceptions such as useless or useful and the constant shifting of these perceptions during colonial rule. One constant factor, however, remained - the desire to keep the Caprivi remote and separate from the rest of the Mandated Territory for most of the colonial period. Hence a recurrent theme is the development of an identity of separateness.

From the colonial administrative perspective, the successive powers accepted that the Caprivi on the micro-level (internally) was inhabited by only two tribal groups, namely Mafwe (Fwe) and Basubia (Subia), each of equal status owning their separate tribal areas. No officially recognized internal boundary line separated the two tribal groups. According to some scholars¹ it is this lack of an officially recognized internal boundary that was the cause of numerous struggles and tensions between the two groups resulting in open tribal clashes (1992 and 1993). The real cause, I would argue, is the basis upon which the Caprivi was premised.

Firstly, the Caprivi, as described in this book, emerged out of social upheavals as a direct result of the involvement of outsiders in the Caprivi, beginning with the Aluyi (Lozi), Kololo, Lozi, Germans, and finally the South Africans. This interaction with outsiders was accompanied by severe cultural erosion and the disappearance of many customs that had distinguished the people of the Caprivi from that of their subjugators. In short, they lost their distinctiveness to such an extent that it became difficult for the colonizers to distinguish between the cultural traits of the people of the Caprivi and those of the Aluyi or Makololo. Not surprisingly, the colonial administrators chose to label them of 'Lozi' origin, resulting in the overriding perception that these people had no historical background apart from being 'serfs' of the Lozi and Kololo. Kruger (1963: 4) states the following in the case of the Masubiya:

Their independence and status as a recognized separate tribe dates back (in historical times at any rate) to the German Resident appointed Chikamatondo, a chieftainship supported and

¹ See Maritz, Chris, 'The Subia and Fwe of Caprivi: Any Historical Grounds for a Status of *Primus Inter Pares*?', *Africa Insight*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1996.

strengthened from the time of the Mandate. They themselves name four chiefs before Liswani (circa 1830) but it is doubtful if there was ever entirely independent status...

Thus in constructing a Caprivianness, which is supposedly based on 'historical' grounds (which is the history of the Lozi), the colonial administrators disregarded local history and neglected to trace the path of historical development beyond Lozi rule as a starting point. Such a quest could have revealed much about the migration and settlement history of the present inhabitants of the Caprivi, which I am inclined to link with what Maritz, after Cohen and Middleton, call 'indigenouness'.² When the identities of the Caprivi were being formed, no historical basis, apart from subservience to the Lozi, existed and thus the more important question of having 'being first' in the territory remained, and still remains, unresolved in the historical and political discourse of the area. As noted by Kopytoff, 'being the first settler in an area gave one a special kind of seniority, it gave one the right to 'show the place' to those who came later'.³ Rather than recognize this, the colonial administrators maintained the Lozi *status quo*. The present was more important: Epstein notes with reference to the Copperbelt in Zambia, 'a critical issue is how that identity is to be maintained over a number of generations'.⁴ The Caprivian identities were maintained by denying their historical past beyond Lozi rule, by recognizing only two tribal groups that were supposedly equal and hence submerging those identities that were grouped together under the Mafwe identity and by showing how different the two groups were from each other. It was premised on divisiveness and the denial of the past. Caprivians were not afforded the opportunity to select and emphasize certain values from their past 'to make positive identifications with their forebears'.⁵

A discussion of migration and settlement history in the Caprivi is beyond the scope of the present study. Analysis of these issues will be limited to a discussion of the different instances of tension such as the disputes over internal boundaries, user-rights to land and the appointment of teachers, positions and promotions in the public service (both before and after independence). All of these factors played their part in the construction of the Caprivi identity.

² *Ibid*, p. 177. See also R. Cohen and J. Middleton, 'Introduction', in R. Cohen and J. Middleton, *From tribe to nation in Africa: Studies in incorporation processes*, Maynard MA: Chandler, 1970, p.13.

³ Kopytoff, Igor, 'Introduction. The Internal African Frontier: The Making of African Political Culture', In I. Kopytoff (ed.), *The African Frontier: the Reproduction of Traditional African Societies*, Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987, p.22.

⁴ Epstein, A.L., *Ethos and Identity. Three Studies in Ethnicity*, London: Tavistock, 1978: p. xiii.

⁵ *Ibid*.

The Dispute over 'Indigenouness' between Mafwe and Masubiya

Two sets of conflicting claims to indigenouness (rival histories) over Caprivi can be found.⁶ The Subia (Masubia) reason that the present Caprivi formed part of an historical Subia Kingdom that was supposedly conquered by their chief, Nsundano I. He named his kingdom Itenge with himself as *Munitenge* (governor, ruler or owner of Itenge: mwinetenge). Within Itenge were to be found groups such as Totela, Mambukushu and Few, all of whom were subject to the authority of the *Munitenge* (see chapter two).⁷

The Subia further reason that the Fwe, as a tribal group, does not include the Totela, Yeyi, Mambukushu and Makwengo (Barakwengo or San); these groupings were supposedly independent from them; the Subia were the legitimate owners of the Caprivi with the Subia tribal chief as the 'paramount chief' of the territory (or historically as the right to be so) and that, under these circumstances, there should not be a border between the two tribal groupings as the entire territory belonged to them.

Contrary to Subia claims, the Fwe argue that after they revolted against the authority of the Lozi king, Sipopa, during the nineteenth century (when the Lozi re-asserted their control after the overthrow of the Makololo), the Subia fled the Caprivi in 1864. Twelve years later in 1876 they returned to Mamili (then representative of the Lozi king at Linyanti), to ask for a place to live. Mamili, after consultation with Lewanika, designated a living place for the Subia in the eastern corner of the present Caprivi. The Fwe reasoned that 'the Germans' (probably Captain Streitwolf, whom they called Katara Matunga - one who surveys the land) drew a border between the Fwe and the Subia and that Resident Streitwolf recognized Mamili as a tribal chief in 1909 and 'extended his jurisdiction over the entire non-Subia area of Caprivi'.⁸ The Fwe now existed as a tribal group within their own territory comprising the Yeyi, Totela, Mambukushu and Makwengo as components of their tribe. They denied that the Subia had ever exerted authority over them.

A host of historical issues arise from the two contrasting views presented above, which beg analysis. I have argued for both (see chapter two above) the Subia as the proponents of indigenouness and the existence of the pre-colonial kingdom of Itenge. Contrary to the view held by Maria Fisch, the name Itenge did not begin with Shamukuni's 1972 article.⁹

⁶ Adapted from an 'Annexure C: Motivation for Research, Objective and Hypotheses', undated and author unknown, which is in my possession.

⁷ The proponent of this view in scholarly circles is a Subiya of Botswana, D.M., Shamukuni, 'The Basubiya', in *Botswana Notes and Records*, Gaborone: The Botswana Society, Vol. 4, 1972, pp. 161-183.

⁸ Pretorius, J.L., 'The Fwe of the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel. A Study of their Historical and Geographical Background, Tribal Structure and Legal System, with Special Reference to Fwe Family Law and Succession' (MA, Stellenbosch), 1975, p. 42.

⁹ Fisch argues that the earliest mention of Itenge was made by Shamukuni. See Fisch, Maria, *The*

Written references to the name date back at least to 1904. In that year Richard Rothe undertook an expedition to the Caprivi Strip and made the following observation:

His promotion (Mamili of Mamili - others use Linyanti) to the position of head of the German Barotses when the country is definitely occupied might, under favorable circumstances, enable us to keep those native tribes, which are composed of Maijes [Mayeyi] and Masubias (*the latter have given their name to the country in the native language*)...¹⁰

The name Rothe referred to above is undoubtedly Itenge. Another instance is to be found in February 1909 during the hearings of the so-called Masubiya Cattle Case. In addressing Chief Mamili, Lozi Chief Letia is quoted to have said: 'I do not have a case with Mamili... Mamili is our man whom we appointed there to represent the Lozi State in Itenge. ... The cattle you [Mamili] are now claiming were given to you by Lewanika as a Lozi subject and as a Lozi representative in Itenge'.¹¹ Does this constitute an admission on the part of Letia, an overseer of the Lozi State in its southern-most part, that there was an Itenge before Lozi rule? At its formation, CANU was fighting to free Itenge, and the present secessionists attempt is to have an independent 'State of Itenge' thus indicating that the name Itenge existed, regardless of its present use and/or abuse.

Further, the Subia contention that within Itenge other groups such as Totela, Mambukushu, Yeyi and Makwengo were to be found, is accepted. Shamukuni (1972:163), in his contribution on the Subia, acknowledges that the Fwe, in the time of the Subia chief Nsundano I, inhabited Linyanti, thereby accepting a Fwe presence in the Eastern Caprivi before the arrival of the Makololo. However, whether these groups were under the authority of the *Munitenge* could not be established. There is no evidence to show that the *Munitenge* appointed headmen in Mafwe areas. Until further evidence emerges, one can only confirm Maritz's conclusions regarding 'indigenusness' in Caprivi:

The available material on the Caprivi does not point to domination of the Fwe by the Subia at any point. In fact, both groups were throughout treated as groups of equal status. From the ethno-history of the Fwe as well as that of the Subia it is clear that there does not exist known historical grounds which can be cited to support a claim that the present Eastern Caprivi as a whole 'belonged' to the Subia and that the Subia chief is - or should be - the only chief (or paramount chief) of the area. No grounds for a claim on 'indigenusness' on the side of the Subia vis-à-vis the Fwe could be found.¹²

Secessionist Movement in the Caprivi: A Historical Perspective, Windhoek: Namibia Scientific Society, 1999, p. 46.

¹⁰ Quoted in Kruger, *History of Caprivi*, 1984, p.4 (NAN: A.472).

¹¹ NAZ: BS2/185, Vol. 2.

¹² Maritz, 1996, p. 184.

It could be helpful, however, to make a distinction between dominating a people and having territorial control over them and Maritz does not seem to be sensitive to this distinction. The ethno-history referred to by Prof. Maritz requires contextualization. This history does not go beyond Lozi rule. Maritz's article came in the wake of the Subia Royal House Declaration of 19 October 1991 for indigeneness and was based on his field work notes compiled over the years whilst working as part of the defence team for the Mafwe chieftainship; his conclusions should be viewed within this context. Nor does he present anything new. He conforms to the accepted official view on this matter, which is to keep the *status quo* regardless of the 'past'. This view, crystallized by the Budack Report, was an extension of Kruger's view of the matter. I quote at length from both:

Assuming there were in the long distant past something of the kind, is one entitled to brush aside all that has happened since, say in the last 150 to 200 years, and which has operated against a continuation of whatever order there may have been and claim a re-instatement? Surely not! Furthermore, he who asserts a relationship of authority over people would be taking a great risk if he could not rely on their submission: there would be endless trouble in the land.¹³

Budack affirms Kruger's position :¹⁴

Even the principle of legitimacy should not be considered in the absolute. It is doubtful whether, after more than a century of mutual acquiescence in the status quo, there is any good reason for disturbing the established order by force. An argumentation culminating in claims for unconditional sovereignty over the whole of the country and its people, or even the expulsion of some of the inhabitants, will surely lead to armed conflict. Your commissioner finds himself in complete agreement with Capt. Kruger when the latter refers to the implications of restoring an order that possibly existed several centuries ago¹⁵

The validity of the contention by the Subia that the Fwe does not include Totela, Yeyi, Mbukushu and Makwengo depends on the period referred to at the time. As the Fwe correctly point out, the above named groups formed part of the Mafwe Identity from 1909 when Streitwolf recognized Simataa Mamili and elevated him to chief over the Mafwe and all other non-Subia people in the Caprivi. Before that, however, even though consisting of groups that were not centrally organized, the identities under discussion were not part of the Mafwe. More recently, the Yeyi and Mayuni (BaMashi) have successfully splintered off from the Mafwe, reasserted their separate identities and formed chieftaincies independent of the Mamili dynasty (see chapter two). The matter of contention between the Fwe and the

¹³ Appendix 22b, Para. 93, of the Budack Report, 1982 (Caprivi Boundary Commission).

¹⁴ Budack Report (1982).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Subia, however, is not limited to the issue of a boundary line or indigenoussness, it extends to the relative power position within the political structures of the Caprivi. This includes the economic opportunities and co-operation in terms of political parties and groupings. The, as yet unresearched, issue of ethnic amalgamation (the merging process) remains. This issue particularly refers to the Mafwe and their constituent elements. The Subia contest this amalgamation by maintaining that the Mafwe and themselves are but one and the same. Further questions arising from this, but not within the scope of the present study are:¹⁶

- Who are the Fwe? Origin, background, course of the amalgamation process?
- What is the relationship between the original Fwe (as a nucleus) and those elements seen as components of the Fwe (Totela, Yeyi, Mbukushu, Mbalangwe, and Makwengo)?
- What is the nature of the relationship (in terms of ethno-psychological distance) between the components of the Fwe among themselves (interrelationship) and in relation to the Subia?

Two contentions from the Fwe side merit discussion, the issue of the Subia asking for a living space from Mamili and secondly, the question of the internal boundary line supposedly drawn by the Germans separating the two groups. It is historically correct that the Masubia, under chief Nkonkwena or Liswani II (Mutola Lizuku), fled Impalila Island, his royal residence, around 1876 to settle at Rakops near the Makgadigadi Pan in what is now Botswana where he stayed as the guest of Khama III of the Ngwanto (see chapter two).¹⁷ After the overthrow of the Kololo, in which the Subia played a crucial role, the latter did not want to submit to Sepopa and rightly claimed their independence status. The Lozi had to re-impose their authority on the Subia and other tribal groups such as the Toka who had stopped paying tribute to them.

For the Subia of Sesheke, one way to avoid the tribute was to flee south into Itenge, which made it difficult for Sepopa to collect tribute from them. Flint, on the strength of Holub, reiterates that less than a quarter of the subject tribes were actually paying any tribute to Sepopa.¹⁸ Lozi hegemony over surrounding tribes at this time was either insecure or had lapsed.¹⁹ As a consequence of his cruelty and autocratic manner of rule, Sepopa was overthrown by a rebellion organized by a commoner, Maata, and Mwanawina II was installed as

¹⁶ These are partially addressed by Pretorius, who, however, does not delve into the issue of amalgamation processes. Rather the Fwe are treated as a composite group. Adapted from Annexure C, research proposal, *Ibid*.

¹⁷ See also Maritz (1996), Shamukuni (1972), and Pretorius (1976).

¹⁸ See footnote 78 of Flint, L., 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa: Citizenship and Subjectivity in Barotseland and Caprivi', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 36, Issue 2, 2003. Flint quotes from Holub, *Seven Years in South Africa*, p. 146.

¹⁹ Pretorius, 1975, p.20.

King. Thereafter Lozi headmen were placed in the Caprivi. Fearing a similar fate to that of Sepopa, chief Nkonkwena decided to seek refuge in present day Botswana. The significance of this rebellion is that not only did it obtain support from the Subia,²⁰ it was organized and broke out in Itenge (Caprivi). The role of Mafwe-Mayeyi-Totela in these conflicts is not clear. For this reason I turn to Pretorius for an explanation:

Apparently the Fwe-Yeyi area was not as deeply involved in the bloody feuds of the two decades following Sekeletu's death and the massacre of the Kololo as the politically minded and ambitious Subiya.²¹

Among the groups that went to Botswana were the late chief Liswani I's three sons, Muni-hango, Chika and Maiba, who were joined by Chikamatondo, a commoner, to whom I will return shortly. A section of this group returned, which seems to be at the centre of Fwe claims. Nowhere is it stated that this group reported to Mamili, then a representative of the Lozi Empire. Even if they had done so, this would have been due to his position as a representative of the Lozi, where he would need to announce their arrival to the Lozi Paramount chief. Is it therefore correct to say that it was the Mafwe chief who gave the Subia a place to live?

Not unexpectedly the Subia's version of this event is different. They maintain that upon their return from Bechuanaland the group under the leadership of the elderly Chikamatondo went to Barotseland where they were received by Lewanika, who had succeeded Mwanawina as paramount chief of the Lozi. When some of the members of the group expressed the desire to return to their former land (now the Caprivi), Chikamatondo was made headman by the Lozi and sent with the group in recognition of his record of bravery.²² Many have commented on Chikamatondo being placed in a position of authority by the Lozi.²³ Indications are that his appointment emanates from this sequence of events. In addition, Paramount Chief Lewanika was none other than the father of Letia, the Lozi appointee at Mwandi (Sesheke) who was a prince and an important member of the royal family and headed the sub *Kuta* in the Masubia areas. He adopted the name Lubosi when he was installed in 1878, changing it to Lewanika (the uniter). A logical choice, according to Flint, as Lewanika was at the 'helm of a nation riven by splits and intrigues, where few of his recent

²⁰ See E.G. Tabler, 'Introduction' in E.G. Tabler (ed.), *Trade, and Travel in Early Barotseland*. (London, 1963), p. 8 and Holub, *Seven Years in South Africa*, pp. 284-285.

²¹ Pretorius, 1975, p. 30.

²² Notes on Interview by Cecil Kruger with Chief Chikamatondo and others on the subject of his position as chief of the Masubia tribe and having a bearing on the repeated claims by one Mulwaliswani to Chieftainship (NAN A.871).

²³ See for example Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa'.

predecessors had died a natural death.²⁴ It would therefore be illogical for the Subia to fear to approach Lewanika directly if they needed a space to live, after all not only was he the father of their sub-chief, he knew them personally as they were blood relations; Paramount Chief Lewanika's son, Letia, was a Subia on his maternal side, as were the maternal relations of Mwanawina and Sepopa.²⁵ Interestingly, why would the Subia report to the Lozi representative Mamili if Letia were still sub-chief at Sesheke? One possibility could be that Letia was by this time Yeta III and had succeeded his father Lewanika, in which case it would make sense since there was no other chief left than the Lozi Mamili. Another could be that the route the Subia took from Bechuanaland allowed them to pass by Linyanti, in which case they would be obliged by custom to pay a courtesy visit to Mamili's court.

I have argued that there is no evidence of effective Subia authority over the Fwe, nor is there any evidence to suggest that Simataa Mamili ever exercised authority in the Subia areas. Fisch would have us believe that since Mamili was the only 'chief' (although it has been shown he was a representative, rather than a chief at the time) left in the Caprivi after Nkonkwena had fled, he exercised powers over an extensive district that extended from Ngoma in the east to Lizauli in the west.²⁶ Ngoma is situated in the extreme mid-south of the Subia area. Fisch does not substantiate her assertion with any sources. It is probable though that Mamili might have been the headman over certain Subia who resided in Mafwe areas. It is likely that the oral tradition cultivated by the Fwe in this regard referred to the movement of one group of Subia only. It has also been difficult to determine whether all the Subia left the Caprivi during the 1876 flight.

The Internal Boundary Issue

Closely related to the contest for indigenouness in the Caprivi was the possible existence of an internal line of division and the question of its demarcation. The colonial administration recognized two separate tribal identities of equal status each within its own tribal territory. However, the two tribal identities shared an ill-defined line of division; this led to various controversies. The Fwe reasoned that the 'German' drew a border between themselves and the Subia, while the Subia reasoned that since they are the legitimate owners of the territory (Caprivi) and that their chief was supposed to be the paramount chief, there could not be a border as the whole territory was supposed to 'belong' to them.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Fisch, 1999: p. 57.

History of the Internal Boundary Dispute

Even though witnesses to the Budack Commission (appointed in 1982 to enquire into the boundary dispute) from both the Fwe and Subia, referred to past controversies regarding the border dispute during the German period, it proved difficult to corroborate such claims without any evidence. The earliest recorded reference to the boundary line between the Fwe and Subia is found in a letter dated 25 July 1930 from Superintendent Brittz of the SWA police, then posted at Schuckmannsburg as resident representative of the SWAA, to the Secretary for SWA in which he stated:²⁷

I have the honour to advise that Chiefs Chikamatondo and Mamili have interviewed me regarding the boundary between their areas, but they both give different names of places that are supposed to form the boundary between the two areas, which Captain Streitwolf made when he was stationed here. The Chiefs have asked me to make enquiries if there are any records at Windhoek which may give the names of the places which form the boundary which Captain Streitwolf mentioned to them when he cut the boundary between the two areas. Chief Chikamatondo claims that the boundary commences at Katima Mulilo Rapids, whereas Chief Mamili claims that the boundary commences at Musuma about 25 miles further eastwards down the Zambezi River.

It can be noted from the above that the discord at this stage was not so much the existence of a boundary between the Fwe and Subia, but the course of the actual demarcation line. Does this constitute an acceptance by the Subia chief, Chikamatondo, that indeed a boundary existed between them? The response that came from Windhoek dated 16 October 1930 stated:

... an exhaustive search through the records of the late German Administration has failed to discover any report of the supposed fixing of a boundary line between the above tribes by Captain Streitwolf. In 1911 there was published in Berlin a book by that officer on the Caprivi *Zipfel*. There are references in this book to the absence of any fixed boundaries between the three (sic) tribes, and the author indicates that it would be a very difficult matter to define such a boundary.²⁸

Budack reveals there is not even the slightest reference in the book to any demarcation of an internal boundary. On the contrary, Budack continues, Streitwolf when referring to the Masubiya, Mayeyi and Mafwe, stressed:

²⁷ Quoted in Budack, 1982, p. 25, see also Kruger 1984, p.13.

²⁸ Kruger, 1984, p. 13.

Alle diese drei Stämme wohnen recht durcheinander, ohne Stammesgrenzen und ohne jede Stammeseinheit (The three tribes live interspersed, without tribal boundaries and without any tribal cohesion).²⁹

If indeed a boundary was demarcated during the German period before the outbreak of World War One, as the Fwe asserted,³⁰ perhaps it would have been drawn by Viktor von Frankenberg und Proschlitz, the Resident who took over from Streitwolf and served from 1911 until 1914. Once again there is no reference to any demarcation of a boundary in Herr von Frankenberg's many reports or correspondence to his superiors. Moreover, von Frankenberg compiled a map of the Caprivi in 1912. In it he defines the 'residential area' of the Masubiya tribe as being identical with the Zambezi flood plain to the east of an imaginary line starting at 'Lifumbera's (Lifumbela's) kraal' (at or near present Kalimbeza), crossing the Lilonga *mulapo* (watercourse) at approximately 17° 41`S. and 24° 28`E. (i.e. to the northwest of Bukalo, the tribal headquarters of the Masubiya), and ending at a place called 'Livesa' (approximately at 17° 54` S. and 24° 31` E.) on the Chobe/Linyanti River.³¹ Von Frankenberg did not indicate the tribal area of the Fwe on this map.

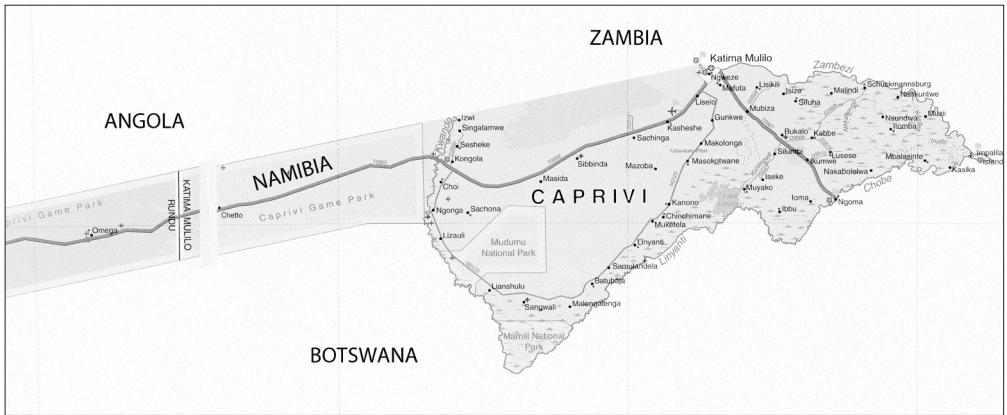
The source of the imaginary line on which von Frankenberg based his map is not clear from the records. It does, however, indicate that the inhabitants had an idea, whether imaginary or not, on which they based their boundary. Therefore the non-existence of a legally or officially drawn boundary line should not be taken to mean that there was no form of territorial rights in a traditional sense. Rather the problem here seems to be its expression, which is influenced by mutually exclusive claims. In examining the Fwe claim, Budack notes that the boundary shown on von Frankenberg's map does not conform to the course of the demarcation line as advocated by the Fwe. He found lots of inconsistencies and disagreement among Fwe informants with regard to those present at the time of demarcation and even the points of reference of the said boundary. Budack concluded:

Considering the inconsistencies contained in the oral traditions, and the lack of sufficient documentary evidence, your commissioner is, to his regret, unable to accept without doubt that a tribal boundary between the Mafwe and the Masubiya areas was officially demarcated by the late German administration. He is, therefore, not prepared to attach great importance to informal marks such as heaps of stone, scars on trees, or dilapidated wooden poles that were adduced by some informants as bearing testimony to the actual course of the alleged demarcation line. On the flimsy evidence at his disposal, your commissioner feels compelled to abandon the idea of using this reputedly historical line of division as the basis for a fair solution to the present dispute.

²⁹ Streitwolf 1911: 118, translated by Kuno Budack, 1982, p. 25.

³⁰ Budack, 1982, p.21

³¹ Budack, 1982, p. 26.



Map 6: Modern Caprivi, its towns, villages and parks

The boundary issue should be placed in the wider perspective of settlement patterns and population density in the Eastern Caprivi at the time. Whereas there had been little pressure in the past for the sparsely populated people to require the demarcation of a boundary, this changed overtime. In the case of the Masubiya who represented about 40% of the population and occupied only about one third of the Eastern Caprivi Strip, an area which was mostly swampy and subject to annual flood inundation, the population density was much higher than in the western areas settled by the Mafwe, a situation that led Budack to conclude that he was:

... thoroughly convinced that any further restriction of the Masubiya living space by demarcating a boundary along the lines suggested by their opponents, will inevitably lead to endless perpetuation of the present trouble.³²

Regardless of his conclusion, Budack recommended a line of demarcation (which he called temporary) that corresponded 'fairly well to what the Mafwe holds as the correct delineation of the borderline, except that it included Kalimbeza and the present 'tribal headquarters' of the Masubiya, Bukalo, in the Masubiya area.'³³ The authorities were reluctant to endorse Budack's recommendation. One consideration would have been possible counter claims made especially by the Mayeyi and other groups against the Mafwe. Were Eastern Caprivi to be parcelled out in such manner, it would have been reduced to a crossroads of internal boundaries, and become a source of further tribal conflicts.

³² Quoted in Fosse, 1996, p.116.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118. It should be added that Budack's report was rejected by both the Fwe and Subia.

Katima Mulilo: A Communal Capital

Katima Mulilo served as the administrative centre of the Eastern Caprivi Strip after 28 January 1935. According to the above proposed boundary demarcation line it clearly fell under the Mafwe chief. Once Katima Mulilo proper was designated (about 1964) it was reserved as government land. (See chapter three above) The status of Katima Mulilo at the time of the Budack Commission in 1982 was never brought into question. In the early 1990s, however, Katima Mulilo became the centre of violent tribal clashes between the Mafwe and Masubiya, and later between the Mayeyi and Mafwe. By this time Katima Mulilo proper (the administrative centre and white residential area) had increased and now included Ngweze, Mafuta, Mission, Wenela, Piggery and Dairy. It housed the Legislative Assembly, various government departments, the official residences of the chairman and vice-chairman (who were chiefs), as well as other members of the executive committee. There were two senior secondary schools, a post office, police and army headquarters, a Roman Catholic Church, Seventh Day Adventists, supermarkets, bottle-stores and filling stations. Economically, general employers included Katima Farm and the Eagle Maize mill of the First National Development Corporation. The town also provided the location for an African open market.

As regards the population, Budack's figures show that Katima Mulilo was inhabited by nearly 16 per cent (excluding the whites) of the entire population of the Eastern Caprivi Strip, or 5,945 out of a total figure of 37,419.³⁴ The majority of the people in Katima at the time were Masubiya in an area considered to be under the Mafwe, as reflected in the diagram below:³⁵

Part of area	ESD No.	Fwe	Subia	Yeyi	Totela	Other	Total
Katima Mulilo	0001	61	39	4	5	3	112
Ngweze	0002-0008	945	2506	217	8	130	3806
Mafuta	2001	367	810	37	26	129	1369
Mission-station	2002	167	291	41	5	26	530
Katima Farm	4001	55	26	31	11	5	128
Total		1595	3672	330	55	293	5945

Table 11: Table showing the August 1981 Katima Mulilo Census Figures

³⁴ Based on the August 1981 census figures, in Budack, 1982, p. 31.

³⁵ Adapted from Budack, 1982, p. 31.

It was important, therefore, to declare the town a communal capital due to its economic, political, social and religious importance, and Budack recommended just that. Budack also recommended that the town be exempt from the jurisdiction of any tribal government and that a village management board elected by those inhabitants entitled to vote should administer it. The board was to be placed under the direct control and jurisdiction of the Administration for Caprivians, or the SWA Central Government.

Bukalo, Seat of Munitenge Royal Establishment

The tribal headquarters of the Masubiya shifted from Kabbe in 1969 to Bukalo following a decision by the tribal council meeting held on the 19 June 1968, which was attended by the Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Mr. P.N. Hansmeyer. The main reason for the transfer was that Kabbe was inaccessible especially during the annual inundation of the eastern flood plains. This was not the first time the Subia made use of Bukalo. Oral tradition has it that the correct name should be 'Buikalo', a resting place that was used by their chief as a stopover when travelling to Mahundu, another royal residence. Although the move to Bukalo was welcomed by many Subia tribesmen and encouraged by the Bantu Commissioner, it met with protests and raised the issue of the boundary in the Mafwe *Kuta* (court). Budack reports that all but late chief Simasiku Mamili rejected the idea of shifting the Subia tribal headquarters to Bukalo. In the end the Fwe accepted the matter as a *fait accompli*.

The issue, however, kept resurfacing over the years in different forms. At the time of the Budack boundary commission, the Fwe put forward what seemed to be a compromise proposal on the issue, which was to leave the Masubiya tribal headquarters undisturbed while extending the Mafwe jurisdiction further to the east. Budack found this impracticable³⁶ as it meant the Subia tribal authority would operate from a 'recognized' Mafwe tribal area of influence. Budack recommended that the status of Bukalo should remain as it was, as part of Subia territory and east of his temporary line of boundary demarcation.

The Lake Lyambezi Area

The main economic activities that took place around Lake Lyambezi, or Muntu Njo Buswa of the Subia were those of fishing and the cultivation of fields. When the lake is full of water, about two thirds of its total area extending over more than 30 000 ha, is covered

³⁶ Budack Report (1982).

by reeds while the remainder (about 10 150 ha), consists of an open surface of water.³⁷ Fishing in the lake attracted people from all walks of life and of different tribal groupings. The majority at the time of Budack's visit were Masubiya, followed by the Mayeyi, due to the two groups' (the Mafwe and Matotela) ancient tradition of freshwater fishing. Even though most of the fishermen did not fish throughout the year, returning to their villages during planting and harvesting season, a number of fishermen's villages around the lake, as well as temporary fishing camps on the shore and on some islands, sprang up seasonally. According to a survey done by Dr. van der Waal in 1980, the income per fishing day was R4, 75 while the maximum annual production was 98, 7 tons.³⁸ A fishing cooperative was established on the lake, with a freezing room and the organized marketing of the fish. Still, the majority fished for their own consumption while about a third, according to Budack, sold fish commercially.³⁹

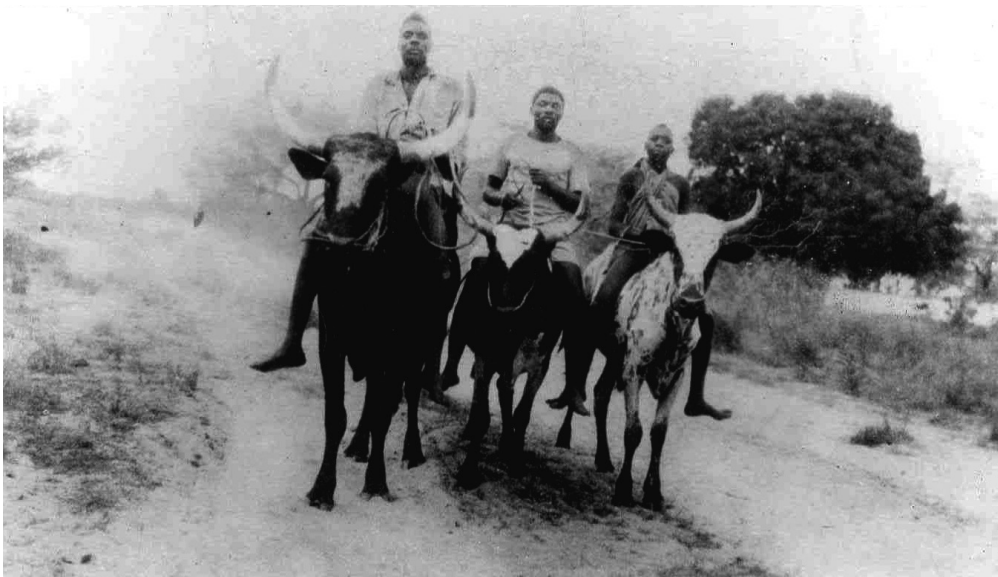


Figure 13: Daily life in the Lyambezi area in the late 1980s

A dried up Lake Lyambezi (as it is at present) revealed fertile soil for agricultural purposes. Lake Lyambezi formed part of the maize-producing axis of Sikanjabuka, Luhofu (Ibbu), Mahundu and Zilitene. It was not only people from those areas who cultivated lands, however, there was a seasonal concentration of farmers from different corners of the Caprivi. As can

³⁷ Van der Waal, 1976: 7, quoted in Budack, 1982, p. 33.

³⁸ Van der Waal, 1976, p.7.

³⁹ Budack, 1982, p.35.

be expected, the concentration of people led to competition, numerous controversies and even serious clashes. Under the prevailing circumstances there was no regulation pertaining to fishing and since the tribal authority did not interfere, there was no local authority to which fishermen could appeal.

The fishing and cultivation rights soon got entangled in the wider issue of ownership of the lake which again raised the boundary issue between the Mafwe and Masubiya. Budack recommended that the lake be proclaimed as communal territory and placed directly under the authority of the Administration for the Caprivians. To settle local disputes and to regulate fishing on the lake, Budack recommended the establishment of a Lake Lyambezi Fishery Board to be elected by all fishermen active in the area.⁴⁰ In more recent times, a government initiated sugar-cane project at Lake Lyambezi ground to a halt when it was caught up in the land rights fiasco, masked as lack of consultation. This was led by PIDICO, the company awarded the tender.

On the surface, Budack's proposals to put the Administration for Caprivians on top of all regulatory issues dealt with above seemed workable but it should not be forgotten the institution was ridden and paralyzed by the issues of indigenouness, paramountcy and land rights. The chiefs were very active in the Administration for Caprivians. They alternated as chief minister and ministers in the cabinet (see below) and were involved in the Legislative Council and day-to-day running and administration of affairs required of a minister.

Caprivi Politics and the Issue of Indigenouness

The colonial state granted the status of 'indigenouness' to two groups, Mafwe and Masubiya. As illustrated above, this continued to be a source of trouble throughout the history of the Caprivi.

The Mafwe *Kuta*

The troubles that engulfed the Mafwe *Kuta* in 1961 concerned the interpretation of the concept of indigenouness as it applied to what constituted a Mafwe. The Mafwe included within its ranks Yeyi, Totela, Mbukushu, Mbalangwe and Makwengo. In 1961 Mr. Jackson Mazazi Lukonga was at the forefront of questioning the issue of indigenouness among the Mafwe. In February of that year he wrote letters to several of *Indunas* (headmen) under Chief Mamili of the Mafwe. In those letters the writer discussed the dismissal of the

⁴⁰ Budack, 1982, p. 35.

Ngambela, the Secretary of the *Kuta* and two ordinary members.⁴¹ On the 2 July 1961, tribesmen in attendance at a *Kuta* meeting had forced the dismissal of the *Ngambela* (Musi-yalela), the Secretary (Benjamin Mamili) and two ordinary members of the *Kuta* (Mutimani and Mwala).⁴² Among the accusations levelled at the dismissed *Kuta* officials were that the *Ngambela* had done nothing for the people in his 21 years of service, that the two headmen did not respect the chief, and as far as the secretary was concerned, that since he was of royal blood he was not suitable for the position which was reserved for commoners. They also complained that the chief's family was over represented in the *Kuta*.

Jackson Lukonga's intentions were broader than the dismissal of these officials, as indicated in his letter: '... And then later on we shall install a new chief who is Thomas M. Kabende – because he is the one we see to be clever to be a chief... also that he is suitable to be a chief'.⁴³ A letter of complaint dated 2 August 1961 addressed to the Magistrate, Chief Mamili, identified those behind the dismissals as Joel Mwilima, Mutumuswana, Lota Mifilifili, Isaac Simanyonga and Alfred Siloiso. The link between this group and Jackson Mazazi Lukonga appeared to be Alfred Siloiso, a close relative (or brother) of Jackson Lukonga. The motive behind dethroning the chief was summarized by Lukonga in one of his letters:

I have some matters to talk to you – and would like to ask how you feel about these big troubles affecting us as slaves, which do not come to an end from the time when people were being captured to the present time. We have, now, observed that this is caused by you elderly people as you do not take heed when we, your sons, advise you. I myself I would like to tell you that we would like to have a Muyeyi (Yeyi) or Mufwe (Fwe) chief. If you still want to be under the rule of the Malozi do so as you like – and of course, I am not trying to cheat you – and warn you that anything you will see in future should not surprise you – and think that we, your children, are not good – and I also would like to let you know that chief Mayiba (Maiba) is treating his people very well because he is also Musubiya (a Subia) – and a person not related to the tribe cannot treat well people of a different tribe.⁴⁴

As summarized by the Bantu Affairs Commissioner when Mr. Jackson Mazazi Lukonga visited him at headquarters in February 1964, the latter was against what he perceived as a Lozi ruling dynasty:

⁴¹ Letter dated 24 February 1961 from Jackson M. Lukonga, addressed to Induna Lisita, Induna Sangwali, Batubaja, and many others (NAN: LKM 3/3/1, N1/1/3, Chiefs and Headmen Caprivi Zipfel).

⁴² Letter from the Bantu Affairs Commissioner to the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development, dated 16 March 1964 (NAP, NTS, 10325, 2/431)

⁴³ Lukonga letter, *op cit*.

⁴⁴ Letter to Induna Sangwali of Sangwali, dated 24 February 1961 (NAN: LKM 3/3/1, N1/1/3, Chiefs and Headmen Caprivi Zipfel).

...after expressing a number of complaints about Chief Mamili [he] asked permission to go amongst the people getting their opinions about the chief, claiming that the Mafue and Mayeyi sections of the tribe did not want the ruling Mamili family. Since then it has come out that prior to the visit to this office he had actually written to a number of headmen openly seeking their support against the chief, at least this is what was said at Linyanti.⁴⁵

The quotations above serve to show that in some quarters people believed that the status of indigenusness was wrongly conferred on the Lozi, and not on 'true Mafwe'. A distinction between the Mafwe ruling dynasty and the constituent elements of being a Mafwe is called for, as it translates into a contest for indigenusness between the chief's family and followers. The Bantu Affairs Commissioner interviewed an unnamed man in another district and reported:

A few days later in another part of the tribal area I asked an old village head of the Mafue section whether any one from his area had attended the meeting and whether they were pleased with what had there been said and received the reply that some words had been good, some not: as to the latter they (the Mafue) did not want to be subject ('Batanka, rather Batanga' – 'slaves') to the Mamili family who traditionally had no right to chieftainship in these parts; he acknowledged Lewanika's day and the Makololo before him (when there were regional *Indunas*) but not that Mamili has or had independent status as chief in these parts. (The original Mamili was, of course, a Mukololo *Induna* at present-day Linyanti); when the Malozi turned on the Makololo and pretty well exterminated them (the men) in the 1860s, Simataa was made headman and he assumed the name of his Mukololo predecessor Mamili and had jurisdiction in those parts. Other regional *Indunas* or representatives were placed, amongst other places, up the Zambezi River not far from Katima Mulilo (Mwanota) and up the Kwando River some miles north of the Caprivi (Seruka, Seluka)....It was only when the Germans came in 1909 that Mamili was elevated to the rank of chief. The old man wanted the 'White Man's rule'.⁴⁶

Clearly, the old man was involved in deconstructing the Mamili family's claim to a Mafwe Identity with its implications for the question of indigenusness. This issue has not been resolved and continues to play itself out in the current troubles in the Caprivi, including secession (see chapter nine). As late as 1994, in a letter written to a local newspaper, Michael Allan Munyandi assessed the crisis in the Caprivi in the following terms stressing the differences between 'True Mafwe' and Mbalangwe:

I am writing to express dismay at the manner in which the Mafwe people are being negatively portrayed as being the cause of the tribal squabbles in the Caprivi region The cause

⁴⁵ Bantu Affairs Commissioner to Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development, 29 March 1964 (NAP, NTS, 10325, 2/431).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

of the present troubles in the region is between the Mbalangwes at Linyanti and the Masubia at Bukalo, namely, the Mamili and Moraliswani tribal *Khutas* (courts). They are waging a power struggle in the region to determine which tribe should take overall administration. The people of Namibia must be made to understand that chief Mamili and Mishake Muyongo are not Mafwe, but Mbalangwes. The true Mafwe people are those living at Kongola, Choi, Sesheke and Singalamwe up to Imusho and Sinjembela in Zambia. And collectively, they share the same Sifwe language. Therefore, the Mbalangwe clan's association with the Mafwe people is in dubious nature. Maybe, Mafwe elders should clearly explain to us, the young generation, their association with a tribe which speaks a mixture of Lozi and Subia. ...The Mafwe elders should also work to restore our lost identity and culture. We live in a democratic society and this domination and intimidation of one tribe by another must not be allowed to continue.⁴⁷

Nothing much seems to have become of Jackson Mazazi Lukonga's efforts to interrogate the issue of indigenouness. His relative, Alfred Siloiso, was fined £50 or £30 plus twenty cattle for his participation in the affair.⁴⁸ The authorities interpreted this as a threat suggestive of an emerging nationalism, at a time when CANU's influence was growing. They ordered Jackson Mazazi Lukonga to stop his campaign, adding 'Mazazi Lukonga has had some association with office bearers of the Caprivi African National Union' and that the situation was difficult to assess, ... what with advanced political thought also playing its part.'⁴⁹

Self-Government and Indigenouness

Mindful of the preceding troubles in the 1960s in regard to the issue of indigenouness, the Mafwe consolidated themselves in 1972 during the establishment of the Caprivi Legislative Council. The first move was to ensure that the doublebarrelled form of the name was revised. The appellation 'Mafwe (Bayeyi)' was changed to Mafwe only with the Bayeyi component being dropped. Protestations about this by the Mayeyi did not yield results. Secondly, a Mafwe element was featured in the symbols of the Caprivi government, the flag and coat of arms and on identity cards. As shown below, two elephants representing the authority of the two chiefs were superimposed in the centre of the white panel of the flag.

Apparently the symbolism represented peace, and was accompanied by the words, *Luyemi Hamoho*, translated literally as 'Together We Stand'. Ironically, it was this symbolism

⁴⁷ 'Mafwe suffer unfair abuse' by Michael Allan Munyandi. Letter to the Editor, *New Era*, 16-22 June 1994.

⁴⁸ Anonymous letter dated 21 May 1961, addressed to the Native Commissioner.

⁴⁹ Bantu Affairs Commissioner to Secretary: Bantu Administration, dated 29 March 1964, p.1f Jackson Mazazi Lukonga was a member of CANU; he fled into exile in 1964. Hewais one of the members expelled from SWAPO together with Muyongo in July 1980, having served on the Politburo of SWAPO.

that was divisive. Firstly, it only accommodated Mafwe and Masubiya, even though some Mayeyi had already voiced their desire to keep their independence, this symbolism ignored their wishes. Secondly, this symbolism did nothing to unite the Mafwe and Masubiya as one group, particularly against the colonial oppressors. Indeed its very purpose was to keep the two separate for the benefit of indirect rule.

The symbol was constantly challenged. One such challenge came from Chief Moraliswani of the Masubiya. After serving his term as Chief Minister he refused to hand authority over to his Mafwe counterpart in 1976, according to the constitutional provision. Chief Moraliswani invoked the issue of indigenouness, arguing that he could not hand over to Chief Mamili who was supposed to be his junior. The Administration, however, did not accept this and eventually after prolonged discussions, which nearly derailed the realization of self-government, Chief Mamili assumed the position of Chief Minister. The Masubiya position was that the constitutional provision stating that one chief would automatically replace another after a term without an election was not democratic. They favoured an election after every term and, if the incumbent was found to be a good leader during his term, the electorate could chose to re-elect him or her. As convincing as it sounded, the issue behind this argument was the Masubiyas' belief that their chief was the 'first settler' and therefore owner of Caprivi. In this case, however, the implementation of the agreement reached in 1972 remained in force, namely the rotation of the chiefs. If it came to an election, the Mafwe were still assured of more votes since they still included Yeyi, Totela and other groups within their ranks.

Chief Moraliswani decided to challenge the issue of indigenouness through the court of law, partly as a result of his disappointment with the Budack Commission report. He lodged an application in the Supreme Court in Windhoek in 1983 (with an appeal to the Appellate Division in Bloemfontein, South Africa). The application was rejected on the grounds that it would not be consistent with the prevailing legislation.⁵⁰ Once again a case that was embedded in history was not judged on historical grounds but rather on 'prevailing legislation'. Chief Moraliswani and his people could not raise enough money in time to appeal the court's decision.

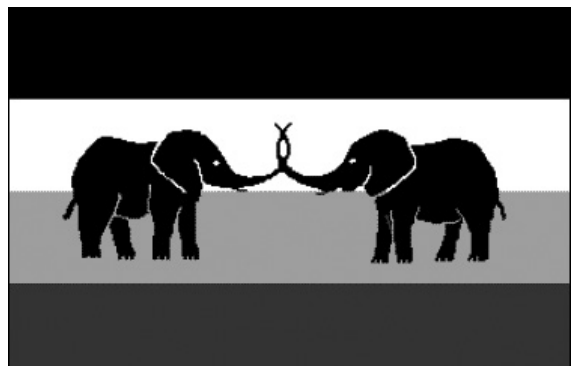


Figure 14: Flag of East-Caprivi adopted in 1976

⁵⁰ Maritz, 'The Subia and Fwe', 1996, p. 177.



Figure 15: Mawfe Chief Richard Temuso Muhinda Mamili, leader of the Caprivi Alliance (CA) which formed in 1977 and joined the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA)

Perhaps this accounts for the unilateral 'Royal House Declaration' of the Subia on 19th October 1991, which decreed that Moraliswani was Paramount Chief on the basis of indigenouness.

The 1990s, however, were turbulent years in the history of the Caprivi. The Mafwe responded by rejecting the placing of Masubia teachers in their schools and there were widespread demonstrations against the promotion of certain officials, which on 31 October 1991 led to the appointment of Judge Levy to investigate the substance of protests against the promotion of certain officials.⁵¹ The protests continued and the situation was exacerbated by the Mayeyi decision in 1992 to break away from the Mafwe, installing their own chief in August 1993 (see chapter two).⁵²

⁵¹ See Levy, 'Commission of inquiry into the cause of resistance by certain members of the Caprivi Community to the appointment of certain senior public servants [Education]', Levy Report, Windhoek (not dated).

⁵² I include a personal note about this period: On 8 August 1993, while a teacher at a Secondary School in one of the tribal areas, my colleagues and I were caught up in the tribal conflict between the Mafwe, Masubia and Mayeyi. A group of about 12 young men came to our school and demanded to know what we were doing in their schools, stating that we had no right to be there. The group claimed that they had the right to do whatever they wished with us or take us wherever they wished. Fortunately a group of local parents congregated at the school and told the young men from a different village to leave us since if we left, the school would be left with no teachers. Therefore, even though naturally they would support chasing us away, the education of their children was more important. That was on a Sunday. The following Monday at noon the locals had to hide us on one of the islands until midnight, when we started off on foot to Katima Mulilo, a journey of about 100 kilometers, without food and water. The next morning, Tuesday 10 August 1993, we were so exhausted from the journey, lack of food and water that we decided to risk stopping passing vehicles instead of avoiding traffic by walking through the thicket of the forest. The trouble was that we might stop a vehicle full of people sent to hunt for us since we were in a 'wrong' tribal district. Fortunately for us, one car stopped. It belonged to a Yeyi, who immediately took us to Katima Mulilo. The path to Katima was cleared of illegal roadblocks by the police special field forces from Windhoek and Grootfontein shortly before we passed, therefore

The Katima Declaration on National Reconciliation

The outcome of government intervention during this period was the peace agreement known as the Katima Declaration on National Reconciliation of May 1993. The declaration stated that:⁵³

- There should be mutual recognition of each other as chiefs of equal status, their royal courts as well as their subjects;
- Each tribe should be entitled to call its supreme traditional leader by whatever traditional or ancestral title or name provided that title does not purport to impose a form of superiority of one tribe over another;
- There should be mutual recognition of each other's area of jurisdiction based on existing tribal districts;
- It was a prerogative of government to appoint or post public servants to any part of Caprivi without reference to tribal or ethnic origin;
- The conference accepted the freedom of the inhabitants of Caprivi to reside in any part of the region subject to the government policy on reconciliation, the payment of tribal land levies and the seeking of permission from the relevant tribal authority;
- It also agreed that respect for traditional chiefs in Caprivi should be accorded to all chiefs on an equal basis irrespective of the tribe one belonged to;
- In the event of a dispute arising between the two royal courts, the same should be settled peacefully in accordance with applicable traditional procedures.

A close scrutiny of the provisions of the Katima Declaration reveals that nothing new was added to alter the neglect of the historical basis on which the issue of indigenouness largely rests. As with previous colonial governments the Namibian government was more interested in national reconciliation. Government prerogative to post public servants to any corner of the Caprivi is enshrined while, for the Fwe, their demand for their chief to be of equal status with the Subia chief is guaranteed. For the Subia, the basis for the Royal House Declaration was not realized, at least not to the extent of government recognition, which does not confer such status under the provisions of the Traditional Authorities Act, or, even by the Fwe for whom it was really intended. However, the Katima Declaration confers upon Moraliswani the status of *Munitenge* under the provision that each tribe should address its supreme leader by 'whatever ancestral title' provided the title does not purport to impose a form of superiority of one tribe over another. The title of *Munitenge*, however does just that

our journey was uneventful. Despite our protestations, the Ministry of Education sent us back after an almost two months break due to these tribal clashes. Colleagues in some other schools lost their lives in these clashes. That episode was a close encounter with the issues concerning an element of Caprivi identity.

⁵³ Recorded in my personal notebook on 12/10/1993. See also *Die Republikein*, 26 May 1993.

as it purports the ownership of Itenge and therefore indirectly still claims indigenouness. The Fwe have since countered this with an equally exclusive title for their chief by adopting the Lozi 'Litunga' which is the term for paramount chief. The contest for indigenouness has therefore been channelled into a new conceptual framework.

The Declaration's decree that there should be mutual recognition of each other's area of jurisdiction based on 'existing tribal districts' presents another problem. It is these existing tribal districts that are partly the source of friction, since there is not one clear border that has been mutually agreed or recognized. The many borders that exist are highly contested. A number of questions need to be asked. Which border did the declaration recognize and on what basis? Does the declaration recognize and entrench an imaginary division, as had been the case previously? Who are the gatekeepers of this imaginary line? In short, the declaration stopped short of adopting the Budack recommendation to draw a 'temporal' line between the two tribal areas. Understandably, as Fosse argues, to do that is to err in anthropological terms because to delineate a border between two communities according to history and cultural distribution ignores the contingent nature of ethnicity.⁵⁴ Fosse makes this point on the strength of Fardon⁵⁵ who a decade earlier made the following observation on anthropologists and ethnic boundaries:

Since ethnic boundaries do not necessarily coincide with cultural distributions, and since these boundaries are situational, when looked at in contemporary terms, and unstable, if looked at historically, then it follows that it is counterproductive for anthropologists to try to legislate regarding their locations.

To reiterate what is mentioned above, this would be a difficult task to attempt in the Caprivi, which now has four traditional authorities instead of the two discussed here and it has become a quagmire.⁵⁶ Instead of one virtual or imaginary line of division, there are now four. Whether all of these rest on claim to indigenouness still needs to be seen.

⁵⁴ Fosse, L.J., 'Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Eastern Caprivi'. MA Thesis, University of Oslo, 1996, p. 119.

⁵⁵ Fardon, Richard. 'African Ethnogenesis: Limits to the Comparability of Ethnic Phenomena', in Ladislav Holy (ed.), *Comparative Anthropology*, Blackwell, 1987, p. 176.

⁵⁶ As if to conclude the chapter in a 'Caprivi way', I woke up to a headline in a local daily, 'Masubia Win Land Dispute' (*New Era*, Tuesday, 20 February 2007). The paper reported that through a presidential decree the disputed land over Muyako near Lake Lyambezi was handed over to the Subia. The President, through the Minister of Local Government, Housing and Rural Development, informed the relevant tribal authorities of his decision at a local lodge in Katima Mulilo. The report says the President acted on the advice of the Council of Traditional Leaders that 'conducted protracted investigations' as provided for by the Council of Traditional Leaders Act of 1997 (Act No. 13 of 1997), as amended by the Council of Traditional Leaders Amendment Act of 2000 (Act No. 31 of 2000). The report continued: 'Though the victors at Muyako greeted the announcement with song and dance, their rivals were not amused. They barred an NBC crew

Summary

This chapter discussed rival histories in the Eastern Caprivi Strip as a result of the classification during the colonial period into two main categories, namely those of the Fwe and the Subia. The colonists decreed and only recognized the above two ethnic categories. These were presumed to be of equal status with each owning its separate area of influence (tribal territory). No attempt was made to demarcate or officially recognize the line of division that separated the two groups, this not deemed necessary at the time, probably because of the sparse nature of the population. While some scholars argue that it is this lack of a clearly defined internal boundary that is the cause of endless struggles and tensions in the area, I argued here that the cause of the tension was the basis on which the identities of the Caprivi were premised.

Firstly, these identities emerged out of social upheavals as a result of outside intervention in the Caprivi, beginning with the Lozi, the Kololo, and then the Europeans. This interaction resulted in the cultural erosion and the disappearance of many customs that could distinguish the inhabitants of the present Caprivi from that of their subjugators; in short, they lost their distinctiveness. Secondly, when the process of constructing the Caprivi was put in motion, this was based on what the outsiders had bequeathed to the people of Caprivi, in this case, 'Loziness'. The people of Caprivi were not seen to have a history of their own other than that of the Lozi. The colonial authorities' construction of what it meant to be a Caprivian was based on the legacy of the Lozi, the traditional authority. The Lozi intervention, however, had deprived many communities of their local leaders up to the time of colonization, and since the Lozi declined the offer to remain in the Caprivi, the colonial administrators modified the tribal structure by grouping certain ethnic identities under an alliance and so reduced tribal structures to just two chieftainships. The Lozi representative in the Caprivi was elevated to a position of chief of this ethnic alliance; on the other side, they chose a commoner (someone not of royal blood), to be chief. These were 'inventions of tradition' since they did not conform to custom.

This is certainly not how the inhabitants had wanted to be perceived i.e. to owe their status to Loziness, which effectively meant the Lozi could still make a better claim to the

dispatched to the meeting.' The Mafwe Kuta responded in the same newspaper through a letter to the Editor in which they said they 'will not sit idle' and let the Masubia 'grab their ancestral land.' In late 2006 Mafwe tribesmen were arrested in Lake Lyambezi by the Namibian Police for cultivating fields in the Masubiya area. The Fwe maintain that they were not trespassing on Subia land but were cultivating fields in Mafwe territory. They accused Subia policemen of abusing authority in arresting the said farmers. Muyako village is on the fringes of Lake Lyambezi and encompasses a large section of the disputed boundary. The case is now before the High Court of Namibia.

Caprivi than they could. The locals desired to be perceived as indigenous, but the question remained, which of the two officially recognized identities was more indigenous than the other? The result was a race for indigenusness, and this lies at the core of the tensions in the Caprivi and has paralyzed the Caprivi for the greater part of its existence. To justify indigenusness, each group presented a rival and mutually exclusive version of historical development. The Subia reasoned that the present Caprivi formed part of their pre-colonial kingdom of Itenge in which the other groups settled under the authority of the *Munitenge*, ruler or owner of Itenge. This formed the basis of their claim to indigenusness. The Fwe reasoned that it was they who gave land to the Subia upon their return from Bechuanaland where they had fled after a revolt against Sepopa, which forced the Subia to leave the Caprivi.

Since then the issue of indigenusness had been expressed in a variety of forms. For most part of the colonial period it was reflected in the debate surrounding efforts to fix an internal boundary between the Fwe and Subia. The Fwe claimed that an internal boundary had been demarcated during the German rule of the Caprivi, while the Subia denied that any such line was ever drawn and that it was, in any event, not necessary since the whole of the Caprivi belonged to them. There is no evidence to suggest that an official line demarcating the tribal spheres of influence of the two groups was ever made.

A commission of inquiry was appointed in 1982 to look into the boundary dispute between the two groups, its recommendations were not implemented and both groups rejected its report. In the early 1960s indigenusness was a contentious issue among the Mafwe with certain groups and individuals claiming that the ruling Mamili dynasty was not indigenous and not 'true Mafwe'. Mafwe identity was consolidated further in 1972 when the Yeyi label was dropped officially from the identity, as they became known as Mafwe instead of Mafwe-Bayeyi. This was at the time of the establishment of the Caprivi Legislative Assembly when again only two identities – Subia and Fwe – were allowed representation in the house. A provision for the two chiefs to alternate in the position of Chief Minister was entrenched in the Caprivi Bantustan. Chief Moraliwani was the first to serve and when the time came to hand over to Chief Mamili he refused to do so, again raising the issue of indigenusness and thereby sparking a constitutional stalemate. Finally, the colonial administration ruled on the issue and Chief Mamili assumed the post.

The issue of indigenusness would be taken to court and evoked in disputes over land rights particularly pertaining to the use of Bukalo, Katima Mulilo and the Lake Lyambezi. The contest for indigenusness did not die with colonialism. In 1991, the Subia issued a Royal House Declaration claiming indigenusness rights over the Caprivi Region, which the Fwe never accepted. This led to tensions that resulted in the refusal of public service

appointments, thereby leading to the appointment of a commission of enquiry into the matter (the Levy Commission), tribal clashes and eventually a peace conference on the Caprivi which produced the Katima Declaration of National Reconciliation. Briefly stated, rival histories based on indigenusness paralyzed the Caprivi and filled it with tensions, commissions and mediations.

7 African Responses to the Caprivi Identities

Responses to the creation and consolidation of the Caprivian identities within the Caprivi were varied. The colonial subjects learnt to work with, around and against the imposition of foreign rule in their territory. This chapter examines three major events which show both consent and dissent: firstly, the results of the 'incorporation' referendum conducted in 1946, secondly, the public hearings conducted by the Odendaal Commission and lastly, the rise of regional nationalism in the Caprivi Strip, specifically the formation of the Caprivi African National Union (CANU).

The last two events, which took place in the first half of the 1960s, had far reaching implications and would mark a turning point in the history of the Caprivi. The Odendaal Commission provided a roadmap towards the inauguration of a Caprivi 'government' complete with symbols of state such as an anthem, a flag and a coat of arms. On the other hand, CANU represented the most organized political association yet to emerge from the Caprivi Strip through which this single identity was challenged.

Sources of Discontent Prior to 1946

During 1937 Major Leslie French Trollope¹, then Additional Native Commissioner in South West Africa, undertook an inspection tour of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. He found a people 'better off than most natives' and a territory where 'famines and droughts are unknown', where food in abundance was present in game, in fruit and in the river. He, however, noted that the 'natives of the strip [were] discontented and that that feelings [was] vocal and was being aired and discussed amongst themselves'.² A written request had been lodged with the Chief Native Commissioner for South West Africa by Chief Chikamatondo³ of the Masubiya for the replacement of Sergeant Brittz.⁴ Chief Chikamatondo and his people accused Ser-

¹ He would become first Native Commissioner/Magistrate of Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* in 1939, deputized by C.E. Kruger.

² Trollope, L, 'Inspection Report: Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*', 16 November 1937, p.19 (NAN: SWAA, File. No. 2267, A503/4).

³ It will be remembered that it was he whom Captain Streitwolf installed as regent Chief of the Masubiya in 1909 at Schuckmansburg, in place of Chief Liswaninyana, who was still young. In 1939, he was about 90 years of age and had been blind for many years and left the administration of the tribal affairs to his son, Mubusisi.

⁴ Resident or representative of SWA in the Eastern Caprivi: Locals called him Brittz Namatama owing to his big cheeks.

geant Brittz of lowering the selling price of mealies from 10/- to 3/- per bag, and that on one occasion he threatened them with what had happened to Chief Ipumbu⁵ when he opposed the administration. Trollope described the people's attitude towards Sergeant Brittz as being 'antagonistic'. Similarly, Eric W. Louw, Chief Native Commissioner for Northern Areas of the Union Government, reported in 1939 that '... the people do not like the superintendent'.⁶ The people had suggested in their request that the Northern Rhodesian system of leaving an officer in charge of an area for a short time only was the better course. Superintendent Brittz had, by then, served for a continuous period of ten years in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*.

The native population believed that restrictions on the sale of arms and ammunition and the killing of hippos and elephants were all Sergeant Brittz's doings, since these were mainly '*verboden*' orders. Moreover, being the only visible representative of the administration in the strip, Sergeant Brittz had to bear the odium for the non-fulfillment of the promises made by Major Du Preez in 1929. Shortly after the Bechuanaland administration was replaced by the South West African administration in 1929, Major Du Preez undertook an inspection tour of the Caprivi Strip during which he apparently made promises that were never honoured by the administration. The promises are said to have been:

- That traders would come from Windhoek and open stores;
- That there would be hospitals;
- That there would be more schools; and
- That more arms and unrestricted ammunition would be supplied by the Superintendent.

Trollope believed the reasons for discontent with the administration at this time to be partly geographical and partly historical. Geographically, the Strip lies between, and was in closest contact with the then protectorates of Bechuanaland and Barotseland. Between 1922 and 1929 the administration of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was handed over to the Bechuanaland authorities. During that period the people of Caprivi enjoyed all the privileges of their counterparts in Bechuanaland, which would not be continued by the South West Africa Administration. The privileges included the freedom to buy arms and ammunition, the establishment of stores and schools and access to markets for the sale of cattle.⁷ By Trollope's own admission, when the South West African Administration took over, most of the stores closed down, the market for cattle collapsed because these were previously sold

⁵ Ipumbu ya Tshilongo was chief of Uukuambi. In 1932 he refused to obey orders from 'Cocky' Hahn 'Shongola' (whip), SA Native Commissioner for Owamboland. For this act of rebellion the South African Air Force bombed his palace at Onatshiku. Chief Ipumbu was captured and deported to Kavango region.

⁶ Louw, E., 'Report on Eastern Caprivi Zipfel', September 1939, p.17. (NAP: TES 2751, F11/243).

⁷

through Bechuanaland and, in pursuance of the policy of game preservation, the authorities restricted the amount of ammunition that could be sold and forbade the purchase of any new firearms.

In considering their conditions the 'strip natives' did not compare themselves with those of South West Africa in relation to whom they were well off⁸, but with those in Barotseland or Bechuanaland. Obviously the administration of South West Africa did not appear in too favorable a light with the 'strip natives'. One discontented 'native' addressed Trollope in the following manner to show his disappointment:

We were first under the Barotses ... we were happy. Then we were given to Germany. They sent Capt. Streitwolf here. When he came many people ran away as we heard they were cruel and would kill us. But they did nothing to us and left us alone. Then the Bechuanaland government took us over and gave us many things including arms, ammunition, stores, schools and the sale of our cattle. Then the S.W. Government took us over. What have you done for us?⁹

Reading the signs of the times even at this early stage, Trollope sounded a cautionary note regarding the growing questioning attitude of the 'natives'. It would be unwise, he wrote, to totally ignore troubles, which the authorities in the Rhodesias had been having lately. Such troubles, he believed, had the flavour of Communism and were connected by the authorities with the literature of the 'semi-religious Watch Tower movement.'¹⁰ Even though he conceded that he was not suggesting any communist peril in the Strip, he pointed a finger at a few educated natives who had been to Rhodesia one of whom was present at one of his meetings. Nothing much had changed by 1946 when the 'incorporation' referendum was held. The Eastern Caprivi Strip, however, now fell under the South African Department of Native Affairs, represented by one government officer and an assistant. It is against this background that the next section examines the referendum.

The Proposed Incorporation of SWA into the Union

In 1946 the Union of South Africa set out to seek the approval of the United Nations Organization for the incorporation of the Mandated Territory of South West Africa into the Union of South Africa as a fifth province. The Legislative Assembly of South West Africa, representing the European voters, had unanimously asked for incorporation.¹¹ The Prime

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.19.

¹¹ Letter from Mr. J. Naser, newly appointed Secretary for South West Africa, dated 19 March, 1946, to Mr. Mears, Secretary for Native Affairs. (NAN: LKM 3/1/1, File No. 14/1/7).

Minister of the Union of South Africa instructed that the 'native' inhabitants of South West Africa should also be consulted. As the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was administered by the Department of Native Affairs of the Union, such consultation was carried out by the Native Commissioner (their representative) in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*.

The people were summoned to their respective tribal headquarters, the Mafwe to Linyanti on the 24 May and the Masubiya to Kabbe on 27 May 1946. After a lengthy address (identical to the one used by all native commissioners in Okavango, Ovambo and the Kaokoveld, except for a slight adaptation to suit the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*) detailing mainly German atrocities in South West Africa and the two world wars, the Native Commissioner withdrew from the gathering to allow the people reach a decision. Both the two *Kutas* replied in the affirmative, and were made to sign a Memorial that read in part as follows:¹²

We, the undersigned, the Chief, *Ngambela*¹³, Members and Secretary of the *Kuta*¹⁴... and our people, wish the following matters to be made known to the peoples of the world:

1. That our people have been happy and have prospered under the rule of the Government of the Union of South Africa and that we should like that Government to continue to rule us;
2. That we do not wish any other Government or people to rule us; and
3. That we would like our country to become part of the Union of South Africa.

On the surface the response to incorporation seems to be that of consent. However, such a response should be seen as a product of the processes of consultation used and the alternatives which were available. Firstly, as noted above, the address and memorials used during the consultations were similar to the ones used by native commissioners in Ovamboland, Okavango, and the Kaokoveld, adapted only slightly to suit the conditions in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. The significance of this is that it indicates a predetermined response, to which the people were supposed to affix their signatures.

Trollope reports that 'in each case the Chiefs wished to give an offhand reply, similar to the final statement ...'¹⁵ Before the people in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* could decide, they were told that the Native People in the Kaokoveld, Ovamboland and Okavango have 'wholeheartedly expressed their desire to become part of the Union of South Africa and to

¹² Adapted from a copy of a Memorial marked as Annexure "C", attached to an affidavit report recording the events, signed by C.E. Kruger on 30 May 1946 before Mr. George Billing, District Commissioner, Sesheke, Northern Rhodesia.

¹³ Prime Minister.

¹⁴ Traditional Court.

¹⁵ Trollope in a letter to Mr. W.J.G. Mears, Secretary for Native Affairs dated 7 July 1945 (NAN: LKM 3/1/1, file No. 14/1/7).

remain under its flag'.¹⁶ Even though they were administered separately, it would seem this move was designed to show how unwise it would be for them to decide otherwise. Indeed, in deciding in favour of incorporation, the people of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* showed a willingness to be in tandem with the rest of South West Africa, of which their territory was an outpost, and thereby undermine the identity of separateness.

As for the alternatives, Kruger's summary is most telling: 'It was a matter of a simple choice between remaining with South Africa or accepting other named alternatives....'¹⁷ This shows the deceit involved in the process, the difference between 'incorporation' and deciding to 'remain with South Africa', which would not necessarily mean the same thing. The official attitude to this incorporation referendum is best revealed in Trollope's letter to the Secretary for Native Affairs where he says:

I saw the Chiefs, *Ngambelas* and *Kutas* of both tribes and as tactfully as I could put the matter to them explaining most carefully that they were in no sense being asked to give a decision in the matter - indeed that if they so desired they could entirely ignore the matter and give no reply at all.

Now what were these alternatives that required tact in order to explain them to the people? Firstly, that there could be no question of the return to German rule. The people were reminded in the Native Commissioner's address of the chaos created by the German occupation of South West Africa: 'that native tribal organizations had been smashed by the Germans, that they had been left without proper land which they could call their own or their home, that their cattle had been taken away from them, that they were prohibited from owning large stock and lastly, for the Herero, that they had been scattered far and wide and that they had lost heart and felt themselves enslaved'.¹⁸

Even though none of the above conditions applied to Germany's Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, it should be remembered that when Streitwolf¹⁹ arrived in the Caprivi, he found it apparently 'deserted', the inhabitants and particularly their Lozi Overlords, had fled from the approaching German rule, having heard, most probably from the British in Northern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland, how cruel German rule was. This incident was still fresh in the memories of surviving elderly tribesmen. National independence following free and fair elections was not an option and the following four alternatives were put forward by the administration:

¹⁶ Address by the Native Commissioner to both the Masubiya and Mafwe Kutas, on 24 May and 27 May 1946, respectively (NAN: LKM 3/3/1, File No.N1/2/1).

¹⁷ Kruger, CE, 'History of the Caprivi Strip 1890-1984', Salt River, 1984, p.4 (NAN: File No. A472).

¹⁸ Address by Native Commissioner, *Ibid.*, op. cit., p.1.

¹⁹ First German Resident in Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*.

- Return to Barotseland domination;
- Amalgamation with Bechuanaland;
- Re-absorption into South West Africa; or
- Continuance of Union Administration.

It should be noted that the terminology used above is 'continuance' with Union administration and not incorporation. Trollope reports that in conveying their wishes (the acceptance of alternative four above), the people made no comment on the other alternatives with the exception that they, in particular, looked on any return to Malozi rule from Barotseland with fear. A closer inspection shows that, in fact, the people were not given any options. They could not return to Barotseland enslavement, a yoke from which they had always wanted to free themselves. Nor could they choose to amalgamate with Bechuanaland since it was explained to them during the Native Commissioner's address that though they had been happy under Bechuanaland administration, legal difficulties with the Mandate system had made this arrangement unacceptable. Re-absorption into South West Africa was not considered an option either from the government's position or that of the inhabitants.

The Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* had been transferred to Pretoria in 1939 due to its 'geographical features'. However, as clearly spelt out above, the people were generally unhappy with their recent experience of the South West Africa Administration. Moreover, the Native Commissioner had stressed in his address how different people of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* were from those in the rest of South West Africa, 'You have not any affinities either of language or of blood or otherwise with these South West African Natives...'²⁰ Given such limited choice, acceptance of the continuance of South African rule was the most logical conclusion. At the same time, the Chief of the Masubiya, Maiba Moraliswani, sounded a caution,²¹ even though we desire to be under the Union Flag, we do not know what lies in the future but if things do not please us we will complain'.²² It would be seventeen years before they were afforded the opportunity to complain about their conditions at the 1963 Odendaal Commission public hearings.

²⁰ Address by Native Commissioner, *Ibid.*, p.1

²¹ Maiba Moraliswani succeeded Chikamatondo as chief of the Masubiya in 1946.

²² Adapted from a copy of a Memorial marked as Annexure "C", attached to an affidavit report recording the events, signed by C.E. Kruger on 30 May 1946 before Mr. George Billing, District Commissioner, Sesheke, Northern Rhodesia.

The Odendaal Commission Public Hearings

A Commission of Inquiry appointed by the Republic of South Africa to look into South West Africa affairs was announced on 21 September 1962 through the Official Gazette Extra-Ordinary of South West Africa, No. 2430. The notice published the terms of reference of the commission reads as follows:

Having regard to what has already been planned and put into practice, to enquire thoroughly into further promoting the material and moral welfare and the social progress of the inhabitants of South West Africa, and more particularly its non-white inhabitants, and to submit a report with recommendations on a five-year plan for the accelerated development of the various non-white groups of South West Africa, inside as well as outside their own territories, and for the further development and building up of such native territories in South West Africa...

As a general observation on the terms of reference, it is important to point out that the Commission was specifically asked to carry out its work within the context of 'what has already been planned *and put into practice*'. The planning content would therefore be informed by and conform to the apartheid oriented socio-political structure. The commission argues for the rightness and appropriateness of separate development in different contexts in the report to the exclusion of any other possibility, in line with the strategy of development. The Commissioners never attempted to challenge the basic assumptions of separate development or critically examine the assumption on which Apartheid thinking was based on the thesis that racial differences imply cultural and spiritual differences. Apartheid was the sacred principle of organization which would ensure harmonious development.

The Public Hearings at Katima Mulilo

The Odendaal Commission conducted public hearings over two days at Katima Mulilo starting on 5 February 1963. The Commission heard oral testimonies from 328 witnesses including:

- Mafwe Tribe: Chief Mamili and his Chief Councillor, *Ngambela* David Mutonga and about 191 followers;
- Masubiya Tribe: Chief Maiba Moraliswani and his Chief Councillor, *Ngambela* Kalundu Munihango, the Secretary of the *Kuta* Sipensa Lifumbela and about 124 followers;
- Native Constable Robert Nchindo;
- Dr. H.J. van R. Mostert, Medical Officer of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*;
- Roman Catholic Hospital: The Priest-in-Charge Rev. Father Curron, Father George, Sister M. Patricia, and Sister Celsa;
- Mr. Jack Ashwin, Manager of Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WENELA);
- Mr. Finaughty, Storeowner and resident of the Caprivi for 20 Years.

As a general comment on the public hearings it is important to note that the two chiefs and their people were interviewed in one sitting. Apparently, due to poor roads the Commission could not visit the traditional headquarters of each chief. Typical of large gatherings only a handful participated in the deliberations. Of the 320 present at the meeting ten registered their concerns. The Commission based its recommendations on the two presentations from the 'two tribes', four from the local white community and one from a black official in the colonial administration. Unsurprisingly the recommendations made by the Commission were very different from the demands made by the people. A matter of considerable interest, however, is the fundamental shift from the general grievances of the late 1930s and 1940s to more specific calls for the removal of the Union government from the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. Of the 10 respondents who expressed their opinions before the commission, only one restrained the others from calling on the South African government to leave the Caprivi Strip. The unanimous and vocal call was for the Caprivi to be entrusted to the hands of another government that would have the peoples' interests rather than the protection of wild animals at heart. The people mentioned the governments of Russia, America, Rhodesia, Ghana, 'UNO'²³, and even 'the Queen's government' as willing to assist them to independence. The more radical representatives among them believed that the people of the Caprivi were able to govern themselves.

These public hearings were marked by notable absences. All respondents from the African community who gave evidence before the Commission were men. Considering the nature of male dominated traditional authorities on which representation was based, it would be correct to conclude that the hearings were a male dominated affair. This is in consideration of the fact that people had to travel long distances to Katima Mulilo to attend the hearings. Traditionally, in those days, women would stay home. Unsurprisingly enough, the complaints to the Commission were about elephants, hippos, arms and ammunition, and the sale of cattle.

A further notable absence was that of the political elite or the intelligentsia, particularly the teachers. It appears that the Commission believed that the grouping of people in a tribal formulation was more representative of the population of the Caprivi, even though it emerged from the hearings that a group of educated young men had been influencing recent events in the Caprivi. CANU itself was about to be launched though at that time it was still operating as an underground movement. One political 'upstart', as the authorities

²³ When told by one of the Commissioners that the UNO was not a government but a grouping of different governments, the *Ngambela* of the Masubiya, Kalundu Munihang, replied that this was even better because where there are many people with different opinions, they should be able to rule better.

called him, managed to hand in a written submission which castigated the government for the lack of proper roads, schools, hospitals, the lack of markets for products and cattle and other substantive grievances.

Regardless of the impact of the Commission's recommendations on the course of development in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, the people used the public hearings as a platform to call for the removal of the South African administration from Caprivi. This marked the beginning of the rise of modern politics in the Eastern Caprivi, where a new order comprised of young intellectuals aspired to replace the old order, the regime of the chiefs that was perceived to be collaborating with the Pretoria administration. What forces, both internal and external, were at work to supplant the old order?

The Caprivi African National Union (CANU)²⁴

The formation of the Caprivi African National Union in the late 1950s owes much to both internal and external factors. For the people of the Caprivi, the rise of nationalism was a response to a 'government which had forgotten us',²⁵ was doing nothing to improve the lot of the people in terms of health, education, markets, roads and was more interested in the preservation of game than the wellbeing of the people. The intellectuals in CANU were prompted by the desire to replace an oppressive and racist regime with one in which the people of the East Caprivi *Zipfel* would be their own masters.

For the white South African regime, the formation of CANU and the desire to be independent was driven from outside, what is termed below as 'the changing world beyond our borders'. The discussion on the rise and demise of CANU will be preceded by a paragraph dealing with the situation in Northern Rhodesia (later Zambia) as perceived by South African colonial officials in the Eastern Caprivi.

The Changing World Beyond our Borders

Introducing their book, *Namibia's Liberation Struggle: The Two-Edged Sword*, Leys and Saul state that the Namibian liberation movement constituted one front of a much broader struggle against white minority rule in Southern Africa between 1960 and 1990.²⁶ It was in the

²⁴ This section draws much from a Chapter on the Formation of CANU in my MA Thesis submitted at UCT in 2000.

²⁵ *Ngambela* Kalundu Munihango of the Masubiya, Transcript of the Odendaal Hearings. Copy held by the author.

²⁶ Leys, Colin & John Saul, *Namibia's Liberation Struggle: The Two-Edged Sword*, London: James Currey, 1995, p.2.

early 1960s that armed resistance broke out in Angola, that the Sharpeville massacre took place in South Africa.

Both these events followed the inspirational media coverage of Ghana's independence under Kwame Nkrumah. CANU's founders concede that they were greatly influenced by other contemporary nationalist leaders such as Kenneth Kaunda, Joshua Nkomo, Kamuzu Hastings Banda, Jomo Kenyatta and further afield, Ben Bella of Algeria, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and particularly by events such as the independence of Ghana and the protests in the Belgian Congo led by Patrice Lumumba.²⁷ 'Everyone was caught in the whirlwind of African nationalism'²⁸, recalls Muyongo. It is no coincidence that Kruger, long serving Native Commissioner²⁹ in the Eastern Caprivi, writes in his memoirs that the rise of nationalism in the Caprivi was an attempt to inflict a new order, which was generated from outside with the aim of supplanting the South African government. He believed that these attempts were encouraged in Zambia by UNIP and in Angola by other movements.³⁰ The Caprivi African National Union (CANU) shared offices with UNIP at Sesheke in Zambia and the party's first membership cards were printed in Lusaka with the assistance of the Zambian government.

Undoubtedly, prominent personalities in UNIP such as Nalumino Mundia,³¹ a former teacher in the Eastern Caprivi Strip, and Munukayumbwa Sipalo, UNIP's Secretary-General, made relations between CANU and UNIP easier. In his autobiography, Sam Nujoma, who was in Lusaka at the time of a visit by the leader of CANU, Brendan Simbwaye's in late 1963 / early 1964, comments that Simbwaye was in '...in close touch with UNIP in what was then Northern Rhodesia'³² and that 'the struggle in then Northern Rhodesia led by UNIP inspired the Caprivians to form their own party since they had no contact with Windhoek'.³³ Jackson M. Lukonga, in a letter to *Induna* Sangwali of the Mafwe Tribal Authority³⁴ wrote: '... I would like to know how you think about UNIP and I want to advise you that UNIP is alright because it is fighting for us to gain freedom.'³⁵ This close association

²⁷ Personal interview with Mr. Albert Ndopu, 16 April 2006. Mr. Ndopu is a founding member of CANU and served as the organization's Secretary for Publicity.

²⁸ Biography of Albert Mishake Muyongo, *Namibia News*, Vol.3, No.1-3, Jan/March, 1970, pp.9-12.

²⁹ He served three terms, being recalled from retirement at some stage.

³⁰ Kruger, C., *History of Caprivi*, Chapter 12, p.1.

³¹ He would later serve as Prime Minister in Kenneth Kaunda's government.

³² Nujoma, S. *Where Others Wavered: The Autobiography of Sam Nujoma*, London: Panaf, 2001, p.135.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.136.

³⁴ The current setting is that Sangwali now belongs to the Mayeyi Chieftainship since their break away in 1992.

³⁵ Letter dated 24 February 1961 (Manuscript, NAN, LKM 3/3/3, File No. N1/15/2).

between CANU and UNIP led commentators to believe the two organizations had joined forces.³⁶

The harsh response the South African officials meted out to CANU and its supporters was partly influenced by events in adjoining territories. This is apparent in Kruger's remarks: 'When one measures what is now being asked against the killing of well over 500 people in Northern Rhodesia in the last few weeks it hardly seems drastic'.³⁷ Fears by the officials that the Caprivi would be a hunting ground for political agitators from across the border³⁸ were not entirely misplaced. The Magistrate/Native Commissioner frequently received letters from such people, originally from the Caprivi but based in adjacent territories. Andrew Masuku Simubali of Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia directed a highly critical letter to the Native Commissioner in May 1965. Referring to the latter as a settler not worthy to rule East Caprivi, the letter raised the following concerns among others:

- inadequate schools
- lack of trained agriculturalists
- lack of properly trained police equivalent to the BSAP (British South Africa Police)
- lack of market squares for selling fish and vegetables
- lack of proper roads
- lack of representation in Pretoria.

As a result of the changing relations between the territory of East Caprivi and her neighbours, the South African Government decided to establish a police post at Katima Mulilo in 1961. The Native Commissioner at the time, Boshoff, opposed the move as being unnecessary. A dwelling house, an office with single quarters under the same roof, a store, garage, and a cell for detaining criminals or suspects were built above the Commissioner's office. The police post was manned by one Sergeant and a Constable from South Africa, assisted by four or five Black personnel. The security responsibilities would later be transferred to the Army. The independence of Zambia in 1964 resulted in the severance by that new government and its agencies of practically all 'friendly relations', which had characterized the earlier annual reports of the native commissioners stationed in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*.

The above section reflects the influence of neighbouring territories on the rise of nationalism in the Eastern Caprivi. It would, however, be wrong to conclude that were it not

³⁶ Kruger in a submission to the Department of Native Affairs requesting the removal of Brendan Simbwaye and Vernet Maswahu from the Eastern Caprivi to some other part of South West Africa. (15 August 1964), p.2. (NAN: BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.4.

³⁸ Magistrate A.B. Colenbrander of the Eastern Caprivi in letter to the Secretary for Native Affairs, dated 20 December 1954. (NAN: LKM 3/3/1, file. No. N1).

for such outside influences, nationalism in the Eastern Caprivi would not have emerged. Kruger, in fact, admitted that while the attempt to inflict a new order on the territory of East Caprivi was generated from outside, there was 'appreciable internal activity by agents and their tentative converts, [with the aim of] supplanting the South African government.'³⁹ While the rise of nationalism in other parts of Namibia emerged largely out of the inhumane contract labour system and systematic land dispossession, neither of these conditions prevailed in the Eastern Caprivi.⁴⁰ The next section examines the conditions leading to the rise of nationalism in the Eastern Caprivi, the formation of CANU and subsequent political repression, which led many to flee into exile.

The Formation of CANU

The Caprivi African National Union (CANU) had existed as an underground movement at least since the end of 1958.⁴¹ Its history is rooted in that of the Holy Family Mission at Katima Mulilo where two of the organization's founders, Brendan Simbwaye and Albert Ndopu were teaching. It was here that CANU held secret meetings in Brendan Simbwaye's house (still standing today) at night to avoid police detection. The first mention of CANU in the media appears in 1961 when in Lusaka the *African Mail* (17 October) reported that a nationalist organization was about to be launched in the Caprivi Strip. The report mentioned that the chief architect behind the move was Mr. George Liswaniso Mutwa.⁴² On the 19 May 1962 the Native Commissioner for the Eastern Caprivi received a copy of a letter the Senior Information Officer for South West Africa had written to Albert Mishake Muyongo, then a young man of about 20 years and a teacher at Kanono Bantu Community School in the Eastern Caprivi Strip. The letter was in response to one in which Muyongo had asked certain questions of a political nature.⁴³

CANU was formally founded on 7 September 1962⁴⁴ with the following elected office bearers: Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye as President, Crispin Simasiku Mulonda as Vice-

³⁹ C.E. Kruger, in B. Kangumu, 'A Forgotten Corner of Namibia: Aspects of the History of the Caprivi Strip, c.1939-1980' (MA Thesis, UCT, 2000), p.43.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Personal interview with Mr. Adrian Waluka Simubali, 16 April 2006. Mr. Simubali was a founding member of CANU with the executive responsibility of Treasurer.

⁴² Kangumu, 'Forgotten Corner', 2000, p. 43.

⁴³ Kruger, C.E., *History of Caprivi*, chapter.12, p.3

⁴⁴ Personal interview with Mr. Albert Zacharia Ndopu, Katima Mulilo, 17 April 2006. Mr. Ndopu was a founder member of CANU and colleague of Brendan Simbwaye. He was a CANU Executive Committee member serving as Secretary for Information and Publicity. Different writers put the formation of CANU at different dates: Kaire Mbuende (*Namibia, the Broken Shield*, 1986, p.154) writes that it was formed in 1962 while Peter Katjavivi provides two different accounts in sepa-

President, Thomas Muyunda as General Secretary and Albert Zacharia Ndopu as Publicity Secretary. Re-organization to cater for tribal inclusiveness took place in May 1964 and expanded the CANU Executive Committee. The new structure was as follows: Brendan Simbwaye as President, Albert Mishake Muyongo as Vice-President, Crispin Simasiku Mulonda took over as General Secretary, Albert Ndopu as Publicity Secretary, Vernet Maswahu as Education Secretary, Alfred Tongo Nalishuwa as Youth Secretary and Gideon Matengu as Transport Secretary. When Alfred Tongo Nalishuwa was arrested in July 1964, Mr. George Mutwa replaced him as Youth Secretary. Other political leaders in CANU were Joseph Nawa (now residing at Simungoma in Zambia), Siloiso Lukonga (a former *Ngambela*⁴⁵ at the Mafwe *Kuta*), Jonathan Mutabi, Charles Mubuyaeta Mubiana, Samuel Musialela and Mr. Matongo (at present a member of the SWAPO Elders' Council). On the 7 September 1962 the following decisions and resolutions were taken:

- the name CANU was chosen for the organization
- the political slogan 'Lyazwa Twaa' (meaning: The sun is out and is shining bright) was formulated
- the drafting of the Constitution be embarked upon
- membership cards were to be printed
- the formation of the organization was to be kept secret in fear of the South African government banning it before it could be formally launched and publicized in Caprivi
- that the recruitment drive for membership be strict and targeted to avoid infiltration and the leakage of information to the 'wrong people', and
- that CANU would work hand in hand with UNIP.

In its 1964 Constitution, CANU as a revolutionary movement vowed to 'promote independence for South West Africa and the Caprivi, to establish democracy and ensure an equitable distribution of land and wealth'.⁴⁶ CANU campaigned more generally to terminate South Africa's rule in the Caprivi and more specifically against the introduction of Bantu Education in the Caprivi through Bantu community schools, the introduction of Afrikaans

rate publications; 1963 in his book *A history of resistance in Namibia*, 1988, p.51, and 1964 in an article published in Brian Wood (ed.), *Namibia 1884-1984*, 1984, p.575. Ernest Likando, a CANU activist, opts for early 1963 as the date of formation in his unpublished manuscript, 'The Caprivi Strip: A historical perspective', 1989, p.139 (The manuscript is held by the National Archives of Namibia. A copy is in the possession of the author). Pütz, J. H. von Egidy, P. Caplan (*Namibia Handbook and Political Who's Who*, Windhoek: Magus, 1989, p.90) states that the organization was founded in 1963.

⁴⁵ Prime Minister, second in command after the chief in traditional authorities in Caprivi.

⁴⁶ Pütz, J. H. von Egidy, P. Caplan, *Namibia Handbook and Political Who's Who*, 1989, p. 91; see also Fosse, L. J., 'Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Eastern Caprivi', *Namibia* (MA Thesis, Department and Museum of Anthropology, University of Oslo, 1996), p. 155.

in Caprivi schools, the intention of the South African Government to take over mission schools and hospitals, the restrictions on the movement of people to and from adjacent territories and the restriction on hunting, whilst officials even those from South Africa hunted and shot animals at will during Safari tours, in what came to be known as 'shooting for the pot'.

CANU also advocated doing away with the name Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, to be replaced with the name Itenge.⁴⁷ Even though the movement was operating underground at this time, a successful politicization campaign was carried out. CANU divided the Eastern Caprivi into 5 political zones, with Katima Mulilo serving as the main centre and the zones demarcated as follows: Katima to Singalamwe; Katima to Linyanti; Katima to Ngoma and then on to Impalila Island; Katima to Ikaba and finally Katima Mulilo itself and its surrounding areas. Often, with no transport available, members travelled on foot to different parts of the Caprivi to address meetings, mostly at night.

Within this short time CANU managed to draw up a constitution for the organization, a format for the membership card (printed in Lusaka with the assistance of UNIP) that was sold to members and, very significantly, send a petition to the United Nations in New York with regard to the plight of the people of the Eastern Caprivi. Since the authorities confiscated the first petition, a second was drawn up in Lusaka in February 1964 with the assistance of individuals such as Mr. Josephat Siyomunji (a relative of the former Regional Governor for Caprivi Bernard Sibalatani) and Mr. Jalarth Mutoyongwa Sinvula (at present residing in Ndola Rural, Zambia).

At the end of 1963 Brendan Simbwaye⁴⁸ left the Caprivi for Lusaka to seek support for CANU's cause from the United Nations and also to cement the existing ties with UNIP.⁴⁹ Subsequently ten thousand CANU membership cards were printed by P.P.S. Ltd, Lusaka; the first one was sold to President Kenneth Kaunda of UNIP.⁵⁰ The membership card (fig.1, below), according to Kruger, was issued upon payment of a fee of three shillings and sixpence (3/6) for a man, two shillings and sixpence (2/6) for a woman and one shilling and sixpence (1/6) for children.

⁴⁷ The name Itenge is presumed to be the pre-colonial name of the Caprivi Region. For a discussion of the pre-colonial Kingdom of Itenge, see Chapter Two.

⁴⁸ It is not clear whether Simbwaye went on this trip alone. Likando writes that he was accompanied by J.M. Sinvula and Thomas Muyunda. This information is not corroborated by any other source.

⁴⁹ Bennett Kangumu Kangumu, 'Heroism: A Glance at Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye', *New Era*, 25 August 2006, p.8. This article was written to coincide with Heroes Day (August 26) Celebrations, which were held at Katima Mulilo.

⁵⁰ Likando in Kangumu, 'Forgotten Corner', op. cit., p. 45.

	C.A.N.U.
	Membership Card
	No.....
Forward to Freedom	
Let us Unite Now	
.....Branch	
.....Secretary	
.....Date	
H.Q. C.A.N.U. House, P.O. Sesheke, Katima Mulilo, Northern Rhodesia	
Members Name: Bwana.....	
Residential Area:.....	

Figure 16: Specimen (front) of a CANU membership card, adapted from Kruger. On the back was written Caprivi African National Union, Caprivi Strip, South-West Africa, and the slogan 'Lyazwa Twaa!' (meaning: The sun is out and is shining bright). Printer: P.P.S. Ltd, Lusaka

Because of the political repression that followed the arrest of Simbwaye, many people who bought CANU membership cards either destroyed them or hid them in places where they were difficult to find. Being found in possession of the card would land one in jail. Attempts to locate an original CANU membership card have to date proved futile. It is recreated above to give an idea of its layout and information. It should not be surprising that the Post Box address on the card is for Sesheke, Northern Rhodesia. The Eastern Caprivi Strip was using that postal agency even for official purposes as there was no post office in the territory at the time.

Simbwaye was introduced to SWAPO in Lusaka during his deliberations with the UN and UNIP. He was advised that it would be better to broaden the scope of CANU's aims and objectives to reflect a nationalist cause i.e. the independence of the rest of South West Africa. He was told that the UN would only support broad-based nationalist movements fighting for the liberation of the whole country and not smaller parties based on tribal or regional ideals. He was advised that there were representatives of SWAPO in Lusaka with whom he could hold discussions to see how they could work together.⁵¹ Nujoma writes that he met Simbwaye in 1964 and suggested to him that they should merge 'in order not to

⁵¹ Interview with Adrian Waluka Simubali, Bukalo, 16 April 2006.

have too many political parties.⁵² According to Simubali, Simbwaye could not commit to such an idea before consulting his colleagues back home⁵³ and therefore his reply was that he would first 'discuss the proposal with his colleagues.'⁵⁴

Simbwaye returned at the end of March 1964. The authorities were already looking for him as he had left the territory illegally. He was accused of fermenting political problems in Caprivi and advised to remain in Sesheke (Northern Rhodesia). In May, when CANU members in the territory had finished selling the membership cards and recruited many to their cause, Simbwaye again crossed into Caprivi to prepare for the first CANU public meeting. He reported on his successful trip but indicated that on his return he planned to sit down with Sam Nujoma for further discussions.⁵⁵

CANU began to engage the attention of the authorities even before it was publicly launched. Early in January 1964, two young men appeared at Native Commissioner Kruger's office and identified themselves as Vernet 'Mussolini' Maswahu and Simasiku Mulonda. Kruger describes the two as 'disrespectful young political upstarts' as they put themselves on the only chair in the office (half a chair each) without waiting to be offered a seat. They had with them a constitution for a political organization called the Caprivi African National Union. Their mission was to ask that the constitution be registered and that the office bearers named in it be allowed to propagate the stated objectives. These objectives suggested the formation of an independent government for the Caprivi to come into being under the supervision of the United Nations. Kruger describes the CANU Constitution 'as fluent, typewritten and having been drawn up by elements outside the Caprivi.'⁵⁶

Sam Nujoma reveals in his autobiography that the CANU constitution was printed with the assistance of Munukayumbwa Sipalo, then UNIP Secretary-General who later became Minister of Health in the first UNIP government, and Nalumino Mundia (a former teacher in the Caprivi who had taught with Simbwaye and who later became Prime Minister in Kaunda's government). Vernet Maswahu and Simasiku Mulonda refused to leave the Commissioner's office when they were told that there was no provision for the registration of a constitution of that kind and that they would be sent for in a month's time after Kruger had studied the document and its implications. In the meantime, they were informed that they should not engage in any activity to further their scheme and take care not to show disrespect towards constituted authority. The police were instructed to keep track of these men

⁵² Nujoma, *Where Others Wavered*, p.136.

⁵³ Simubali interview.

⁵⁴ Nujoma, *op.cit.*

⁵⁵ Simubali, *op.cit.*

⁵⁶ In Kangumu, 'Forgotten Corner', p.44. See also Nujoma, *op.cit.*

especially with regards to the holding of meetings as these were prohibited by regulation and tribal law unless prior permission had been obtained.

Before the month was up, the young men returned demanding a reply. Kruger described his impression that they were ready with something else, shifting from one thing to another but always with the same badgering tactics to 'create a situation that they could turn to their advantage, testing government authority and hoping for an opening'.⁵⁷ The laws applicable to the Caprivi at this time were those of South West Africa (up to 1939) and contained nothing relevant to the new emerging political situation. In instances where the administration was being 'undermined', the only provision available to the authorities was the one restricting unauthorised meetings where the maximum punishment for contravention hardly fitted the new circumstances. However, as a last resort, the Administration Proclamation of 1928 did provide for removals under Ministerial Order to another part of the territory when any behaviour amounted to a serious undermining of constituted authority.

Meanwhile increased activity with 'subversive' intent, particularly the advent of CANU and its poposals, were reported to Pretoria. This was accompanied by a recommendation that a statement (a draft of which was submitted) be made at both tribal headquarters at specially assembled meetings of tribesmen. Pretoria gave its blessing to this line of action. As a first step a meeting was arranged with the Masubiyi *Kuta* at Kabbe and CANU was informed that they would get their answer there. Whilst the authorities hoped that the declaration which was made at the huge gathering would discredit CANU as an organization composed of young men with 'no credentials', and influence the people against joining it, Kruger concedes that there was little noticeable reaction except that the *Ngambela* put it to him that the CANU representatives present had asked whether they could address the meeting. This request was denied.

The Northern News of Northern Rhodesia reported on 8 May 1964 that a new political party had been formed in the Caprivi Strip with offices in Lusaka. The report quoted the founder and President of CANU, Brendan Simbwaye, as the source. CANU also maintained offices at Sesheke, immediately across the border adjacent to Katima Mulilo. This was the site of the UNIP offices in this region of Zambia. In the Caprivi Strip, CANU had its headquarters at a place called Mafulo, meaning an encampment where they had what Likando⁵⁸ refers to as 'Freedom House', a thatched house they used as an office for administrative purposes. This small house was given to CANU by an old man named Maxwell, who owned several from where he ran his small business.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Kruger, 'History of Caprivi', 1984, p.4.

⁵⁸ Likando. *History of Caprivi*, 1989, p.140.

⁵⁹ Personal interview with Mr. Adrian Waluka Lukas Simubali, *op.cit.*

This was not the first CANU office in Katima Mulilo. According to Adrian Waluka Simubali, the first CANU office was at Mahohoma Township behind the Holy Family Mission in a small brick house that was unoccupied at the time. The original house was thatched and belonged to an old man called Soja who had built it with the intention of starting a small business selling fat cookies, a scheme which did not materialize. Crispin Mulonda's father had a hawker's license that CANU members used under the pretext of running a business. Meetings were held here until Brendan Simbwaye and Albert Ndopu left their teaching positions at the Holy Family Mission and moved to Mafulo.⁶⁰

Mafulo, which could well be the first proper African township of Katima Mulilo, was originally chosen as the rest camp of the chief of the Mafwe and his councillors when visiting headquarters and still served this purpose.⁶¹ It was situated about three miles from headquarters just off the road to Finaughty's⁶² shop. The road led on to the Northern Rhodesia border where there were large shops and a facility for cashing cheques. Caprivi Strip inhabitants as well as government agencies were using Northern Rhodesian currency at the time. Because of its location, Mafulo attracted many people from adjacent and surrounding places, for the purpose of 'doing a bit of trading by way of tea-rooms, selling fish, produce or wares brought from the countryside and others doing nothing in particular'.⁶³ Not much control existed in Mafulo, a state of 'lawlessness' that was particularly conducive to CANU's objective of mobilization and the spread of ill-will towards the administration and, as Kruger writes, that they (CANU) made the most of it. He recalls placards on trees at Mafulo declaring 'Down with Verwoerd' and 'Go Home Boers'. Many CANU politicians moved into Mafulo's residential area, including Brendan Simbwaye after he resigned from his teaching post.

CANU's Subversive Activities against the Authorities

CANU's launch was preceded by a student strike at the Holy Family Mission School at Katima Mulilo in March 1964. According to the authorities, the 'night disturbance', as Kruger terms it, was initiated by two CANU members. This resulted in their arrest as well as that of four of the older schoolboys who had taken part. The CANU members were sentenced to a term of imprisonment and the boys to a caning.⁶⁴ Kruger ascribes the causes of the strike to the fact that a number of CANU office bearers were dismissed from their teaching posts at

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ The rest camp for the chief of the Masubiya was at a site not far from Namwi Island next to Kambinda's village, east of Katima Mulilo, (Interview with Adrian Waluka Simubali, 16 April 2006).

⁶² Bill Finaughty was a trader who by 1963 had lived in the Caprivi for 20 years.

⁶³ Kruger, *History of Caprivi*, 1984, p.8.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.6.

schools managed by the Roman Catholic Mission on the grounds of their political involvement and 'questionable loyalty'. The two CANU members who were arrested were Adrian Waluka Simubali and Alfred Tongo Nalishuwa.

CANU and the learners maintained that the strike was held to demand improvements especially in the way the hostel was run. Even though learners paid hostel fees, they were not provided with mattresses and slept on the floor or on traditional mats they brought with them from home. They cooked for themselves in the hostel, the quality of food was, however, very bad - rotting fish and cabbage, porridge without sugar (learners had to add salt and fresh lemon juice from lemons that they picked in the garden to make their porridge tasty). Sugar was only occasionally provided to the girls, even then only in small quantities. Meat was provided once a week (every Saturday) otherwise during the course of the week learners had to fend for themselves. According to former learners interviewed, some of them (who had no relatives or parents in Katima Mulilo) would be forced to go fishing in the Zambezi after school to provide for their needs.⁶⁵ These were the grievances that led to the strike.

In any event, the school environment was a fertile breeding ground for CANU. As an organization started by teachers it would have a profound influence on learners and its recruitment systematically targeted schoolboys who were taken to Zambia, probably induced by some promises. Reports from headmasters about missing children abounded. In letters dated 27 and 29 March 1965, Mr. A. Kasu, head of Nakabolelwa Community School, reported that two scholars had run away from his school to Zambia with CANU members. The two scholars, Boniface Chandu Sekelo and Sinvula Shantambwa (Santambwa), were led by Godfrey Kawana Mwananawa of Ikaba. The report named six boys who were planning to follow: Robson Musialike, Alfred Simataa Kabajani, Kangumu Nechenge, Milinga Munguni, Shoni Musipili and Nkonkwena Musialike.⁶⁶ In 1964 when books and materials were sent to the newly established Bantu Community School at Kasheshe, about 30 kilometers west of Katima Mulilo, people refused to accept them saying Simbwaye had told them not to accept the school or Bantu education. The administration had to rely on the assistance of the traditional leaders. In a letter to Chief Maiba Moraliswani, Kruger writes:

I have had reports that a man named Godfrey Kawana Mwananawa, acting as a CANU agent, is persuading children at school in the Caprivi to leave the particular school on a promise that

⁶⁵ Personal interview with Adrian Waluka Simubali. (16 April 2006). Former learners interviewed are Fidelis Mayumbelo (15 April 2006), Konard Kaela Machinga (16 April 2006) and a group interview consisting of Michael Matengu, Sylvester Matengu and Ignatius Matengu (14 April 2006).

⁶⁶ Letter to the District Officer, possibly the Native Commissioner. (NAN: LKM 3/3/1, N1/2/1).

they will be educated in Zambia. I hear also that Chaka of Muyako is helping – that he wrote a letter. It is said that this matter was reported to you and that you are dealing with it. I shall be glad if you will let me know what is happening. I wish just to mention that anyone leaving his country without proper authority commits an offence and anybody helping him to do that is likewise liable to punishment.⁶⁷

It has been argued elsewhere that the colonial administration in the eastern Caprivi Strip was not in the form of direct rule, but persuasive and indirect.⁶⁸ As such, the confidence of the chiefs and their people was essential to both the colonial officials and the political intelligentsia. While the administration sought to use tribal gatherings to discredit CANU as an organization composed of young men ‘without any credentials’, CANU too knew that it needed the support of the chiefs in its endeavour to unseat the Pretoria government. As early as April 1964 the two traditional authorities of the time were influenced by CANU to submit formal complaints against the administration about a variety of situations, while employees of the administration did the same about their conditions of service. In the same year a letter arrived from the Department of Bantu Affairs in Pretoria with papers sent from Pretoria’s representative at the United Nations. Among the papers was a petition⁶⁹ addressed to the United Nations and signed by both chiefs and one or two of their *Kuta* members asking that a United Nations body replace the South African government. Kruger, in his disbelief, investigated the matter and found out that indeed the petition had been signed on behalf of the two chiefs (who themselves could not read or write English) in their presence by one or two of their councillors. He blamed the move on CANU and its associates.

In some instances CANU resorted to making traditional institutions ungovernable for the administration. A case in point is the trouble that engulfed the Mafwe tribal authority and led to the dismissal of the *Ngambela*, David Siukuta. During May 1964, *Ngambela* Siukuta was called to an irregular hearing at Mafulo attended by one regular *Kuta* member, *Induna* Chunga. The *Ngambela* was allegedly subjected to threats, thrown out of office and warned not to approach the tribal headquarters at Linyanti. Fearing for his life, the *Ngambela* resorted to spending nights in hiding in the forest. This was not the first time the *Kuta* had experienced such trouble. Three years earlier, on 29 July 1961, tribesmen in attendance at a meeting obtained the dismissal of the *Ngambela* (Musiyalela), the secretary (Benjamin Mamili) and two ordinary members of the *Kuta* (Mutimani and Mwaala). Davidson Mubonenwa was appointed as *Kuta* Secretary with Solomon Kanyanso and Solomon Nkan-

⁶⁷ Undated letter from Kruger to Chief Moraliswani Maiba of the Masubiya, reference no. N1/9/3 (NAN, LKM 3/3/3, File No. N1/15/2)

⁶⁸ Trollope, *Inspection Report*, *op. cit.*, p.15.

⁶⁹ Efforts to locate a copy of this petition have not yielded any results.

do in place of the two ordinary members, whilst David Siukuta became the new *Ngambela*. The Chief complained that by submitting to the tribesmen the administration damaged the authority and position of the chieftainship:

... you have taken my powers and gave it to my people who took off my three *Indunas* from their work without my consent. I am the one who chose them to help me in this native court and have the power to dismiss who make wrong.⁷⁰

Even though the administration was warned that the people who caused these troubles at Linyanti *Kuta* in 1961 were also 'planning to take out these people who come from South Africa who are ruling us',⁷¹ the administration did not find any direct link between this event and CANU. The administration, however, seems to have regretted their initial inaction. Following the second incident in 1964, the police were ordered to immediately arrest those perceived to be behind the dismissal of the *Ngambela* and the two brothers Jackson Mazazi Lukonga⁷² and Alfred Siloiso. Lukonga was arrested pending a trial by the *Kuta*. In a letter to the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development, the Bantu Affairs Commissioner describes the two as having a critical turn of mind and having had some association with office bearers of the Caprivi African National Union.⁷³ For the Commissioner, this confounded the problem, 'what with advanced political thought also playing its part'.⁷⁴ The Bantu Commissioner, in a letter dated 15 August 1964 to *Induna* Chunga of Linyanti, makes a clear reference to CANU's involvement in the 'throwing-out' of the *Ngambela* at Mafulo,

I hear ... that you and others are supporting a letter written by CANU. Did you support your chief ... or did you side with the rabble that threw out the *Ngambela* at Mafulo? Were you sitting on the important chair at Mafulo when the *Ngambela* was called by these men, through you, and did you respect him? You will answer these things, Chunga, you and the others with you. What is this nonsense I hear about the chief selling the country to the white men?

A meeting of the whole *Kuta* was arranged with the chief. The Bantu Affairs Commissioner went to the tribal headquarters at Linyanti the day before, accompanied by the *Ngambela* and the two prisoners under the care of Constable Bosman. In the late afternoon they were

⁷⁰ Letter from old Chief Simasiku Mamili of the Mafwe to the Native Commissioner dated 7 September 1961 (NAN: 3/3/1, N1/2/1).

⁷¹ Letter from K. Band and M. Kunana to the Native Commissioner dated 2 January 1963. (NAN: 3/3/1, N1/2/1).

⁷² Jackson Mazazi would indeed play a crucial role in CANU politics. He went into exile and was one of the CANU leaders in SWAPO, serving on the Central Committee of SWAPO until 1980 when he was expelled together with eight others, including Albert Mishake Muyongo.

⁷³ Letter from Bantu Affairs Commissioner of the Caprivi to the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development, dated 29 March 1964, p.1. (LKM 3/3/1, N1/2/1).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.2

astonished to see a three ton lorry pull up. It was transporting a score or more of shouting and singing CANU members duly organized for the occasion to join those living near by. The Commissioner asked the assembled *Kuta* members whether they were prepared to see justice done by firstly, upholding the *Ngambela* and thereafter proceeding to the trial of the two men. To his disappointment 'not one of the *Kuta* members present was prepared to agree'.⁷⁵ The exception was the chief who agreed with Commissioner Kruger but this was of no help. Consequently, the only option left was to withdraw the case, at which point Constable Bosman released the two men from his custody. They were immediately and heroically surrounded by their jubilant supporters. Kruger saw this as 'another gain, if shallow, for the CANU upstarts'.⁷⁶

A Cattle Sale⁷⁷ as a Contested Terrain

The nature of indirect rule in the Eastern Caprivi Strip was such that government representation consisted of only one officer plus an assistant. Therefore the development of nationalism in that part of Namibia did not benefit from the usual trends or routes of resistance and defiance such as labour unrest and stay aways, boycotts of services (for there were none), etc. The economy was mainly rural and subsistence-based. To show defiance, CANU had to get the better of the administration in less obvious spheres such as a cattle sale designed, to all intent, for the benefit of the people. It will be recalled that the people of the Eastern Caprivi complained bitterly about the lack of markets for the disposal of their cattle. During the Bechuanaland regime, cattle from the eastern Caprivi Strip were freely allowed to cross into Bechuanaland to be sold, as there was veterinary control of the area. When the South West Africa Administration took over in 1929 this market was closed, as the Bechuanaland authorities feared the introduction of lung sickness from Barotseland via the Strip.

To illustrate the above point, just as the authorities managed to obtain permission to export 800 head of cattle from the Strip to Bechuanaland after a struggle of eight years, lung sickness was detected (the very week that the permit arrived) and the export was stopped. Following the South African takeover, there was no outlet for stock from the strip and therefore no trading in cattle. By 1939 Louw found that the area was becoming overstocked.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Kruger, *History of Caprivi*, 1984, p.8.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.9

⁷⁷ For a detailed discussion of the Barotseland Cattle Trade, especially at the Zambezi Saw Mills to which many cattle from the Eastern Caprivi were sold for consumption, see Hugh Macmillan's *An African Trading Empire: The Story of Susman Brothers & Wulfsohn, 1901-2005*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2005.

⁷⁸ Louw, 'Inspection Report', 1939, p.10.

Sales remained insignificant and were illegal. A small avenue for disposal was through the Barotseland traders who would buy cattle in Barotseland for sale for rationing purposes to the sawmills that operated in the province. As the movement was from one infected area to the other, they were permitted to purchase cattle from the Strip.⁷⁹ Stock control and inoculation was therefore dependent on events in adjacent territories.

Outlet to a market for surplus cattle had always been of great concern to the administration. Protracted negotiations to buy cattle in bulk from the Strip were concluded with the Northern Rhodesia Cold Storage Commission in 1963. Once arrangements were finalized for a two-day sale in April, a weighbridge was installed at Katima Mulilo with necessary kraals and races so that the transaction was one of a fixed rate by exact weight. The commission related their offer to what they paid across in Northern Rhodesia, making allowances for additional costs such as placing the cattle in quarantine and the risks involved in driving them across to Livingstone through Impalila Island. The representative of the Commission arrived an afternoon before the appointed date as did herds of cattle around the sale pens.

The atmosphere during the day of the cattle sale, according to Kruger, was oppressive because of the way CANU agents 'were mingling with the crowd in a way that suggested they were up to no good'.⁸⁰ When the prices for the first cattle were announced, they were flatly rejected; following that no single beast was offered. It transpired that people were not satisfied with the price offered as this was far below those paid across the river in Barotseland. A few days later a Northern Rhodesian newspaper was shown to Kruger showing the prices paid by the Cold Storage Commission in Northern Rhodesia. He (Kruger) was astonished to find that they were considerably higher than what they had offered in the Caprivi. Kruger remarked: 'I don't believe the CANU agents, in their ignorance, knew the difference – if they did, so much the worse. But their scheming had all the appearance of getting the better of the administration, leading the people generally, in their confused state, to a belief that I myself was not to be trusted'.⁸¹

Subsequent events would prove that the CANU 'agents' knew the difference and that they were not ignorant. After the breakdown of this cattle sale, CANU decided to bypass the administration and negotiate with the Northern Rhodesia Cold Storage Commission directly on behalf of the people, to which end two men were sent to Livingstone. This was only revealed to Kruger in a letter from the representative of the Cold Storage Commission there.

⁷⁹ Mr. Bennett of Mulobezi applied for permission to buy 1000 head of cattle for cash in the Strip in 1937 for this purpose. (Trollope, 1937 'Report', p.24)

⁸⁰ Kruger, *History of Caprivi*, 1984, p.7.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

A cattle sale provided the perfect opportunity for a clash between CANU and the administration. For once, albeit momentarily, CANU managed to make Kruger, a representative of an oppressive regime, feel oppressed and powerless. This open defiance of authority enhanced CANU's position and spread its influence to rural areas. It was not uncommon, Kruger wrote, when travelling outside Katima Mulilo to hear even small children shouting 'Kwacha', a word denoting freedom or waking up from colonialism, as one passed through the villages, with no one doing anything to restrain them.⁸² There were common references to 'the boers', and in a song people called upon 'the boers' to go back to their country, telling them 'we are not afraid of your guns', Kruger recalled.⁸³ Most likely, the song being referred to was the famous CANU song: *Cenjela maburu cenjelaa, CANU ci ya sika lya zwa twaa. Cen-jela cenjela maburu cenjelaa, CANU ci ya sika lya zwa twa: Lya zwa Twaa, Lya zwa Twaa.*⁸⁴ Because of such defiance, the administration was eager to assert its authority. Until then, Kruger believed that, 'CANU has had pretty well a free hand in their disruptive activities', continuing, 'I am firmly of opinion the time has come to act against them. This, it is thought, is a crucial stage in Caprivi affairs: if we do not act now when will we do so?'⁸⁵ This marked the start of a clampdown on CANU and its activities in the Caprivi and ruthless political repression that would leave CANU's leadership and their followers either in detention, in hiding or on the run.

The focus of the next chapter is therefore on political repression in the Caprivi and particularly the arrest, detention and disappearance of Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye, CANU's founder, together with Vernet Maswahu, another missing CANU leader.

⁸² *Ibid.* p.7.

⁸³ Kruger, in a Submission requesting the ministerial removal of or an order banishing Brendan Simbwaye from the eastern Caprivi, dated 15 August 1964, p.2. (NAN: BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II.)

⁸⁴ Translates as 'Beware Boers beware, CANU is here. The sun has risen and is bright denoting awakening'. Interview with Mr. Fidelis Mwiya Mayumbelo at Bukalo, 15 April 2006.

⁸⁵ Kruger, Submission, (NAN: BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II.), p.4.

8 Regional Nationalism and Repression

Political Repression and Brendan Simbwaye's Disappearance

The emergence of CANU benefited from an absence of legal provision to contain its 'subversive' activities as the laws applicable to the eastern Caprivi Strip were those of South West Africa up to 1939. Political repression in the Caprivi found expression under two provisions of administrative law. The first was the Native Administration Proclamation, 1928 (Proclamation no.15 of 1928, South West Africa) read in conjunction with section three of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* Administration Proclamation, 1939 (Proclamation no. 147 of 1939). Paragraph (d) of section one of the above proclamation (1928) provided for removal under ministerial order to another part of the territory (SWA) in the event of behaviour amounting to a 'serious' undermining of authority. This was meant to be used as a last resort.

The second provision was the prohibition of gatherings in 'native' areas unless specifically permitted by the tribal chief or the Native Commissioner. This was enacted in Proclamation No. 198 of 1953, which sought to impose severe penalties upon any person who held a meeting without the prior knowledge of the chief and the approval of the Native Commissioner. In an Identical Minute issued with the concurrence of the Secretary for Justice on 4 July 1958, the Secretary for Native Affairs reminded all officials of the Department of Native Affairs:

Because attempts are being made nowadays to undermine the authority of the chiefs and the government, often through the medium of unlawful gatherings and meetings, it is imperative that the provisions of Proclamation No. 198 of 1953 should again be brought to the attention of all chiefs and headmen. The Department has reason to doubt whether the chiefs really understand the implications of, and the firm support given them by, this legal enactment.¹

If the chiefs in the Caprivi Strip did not understand the implications and 'firm' support given by the above proclamation, this was not the case with the police and the Native Commissioner. In the middle of 1964 the police informed the Native Commissioner that they had information that Simbwaye would address a meeting at Mafulo where a large number of supporters had gathered and that they were determined to make arrests if they found a

¹ Minute issued by the Secretary of Native Affairs dated 4 July 1958, 'Control of Meetings or Gatherings in Native Areas'. It was addressed to all officials of the Department of Native Affairs, all Magistrates, Additional and Assistant Magistrates and full time Special Justices of the Peace. (BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II).

meeting in progress, since no permission had been given as required by tribal law as well as by regulation. According to CANU activists, even though permission for the meeting was requested several times, the Native Commissioner refused this². Despite this refusal it was decided that the meeting would go ahead.

At Mafulo, Sergeant Hartmann and his son-in-law Sakkie Bosman of the police accompanied by a score of Black askaries³ found a CANU meeting in progress, the first public rally⁴ at which the organization was to be launched and the political programme outlined. The president of CANU, Brendan Simbwaye, was to address the rally. When the police arrived it was Alfred Tongo Nalishuwa who was addressing the meeting and he was picked up first, followed by Brendan Simbwaye. These were the only two arrested at that meeting.⁵ Even

² Adrian Waluka Simubali, personal interview on 16 April 2006. See also the notes of conversation between Brendan Simbwaye and Advocate Israel Goldblatt of 2 October 1964 (in Goldblatt, *Building Bridges*). In this entry Goldblatt states that Brendan Simbwaye told him that he asked the native commissioner three times for permission to hold a political meeting but this was refused.

³ Black policemen of the time were known as UG, and wore clothes marked as such, possibly Union Government. People teasingly called them 'Useless Government'. Those present at Simbwaye's arrest were: Francis Lilungwe Ilukena, Raymond Mowa Mwilima, Leonard Kachenje Chaka, Lawrence Nchindo, David Lopa Mbeha, Moffat Matali, and Nfwile (Personal interview with Albert Zacharia Ndopu). Ignatius Mazambani Matengu added the following names to this list: Wilson, Nathan, Lubembo and Muyonge (personal interview, 16 April 2006).

⁴ There is confusion as to when this meeting took place. CANU activists interviewed separately maintain that it was in mid July (Albert Ndopu and Ignatius Matengu), the latter stating that Simbwaye was arrested on the morning of 15 July 1964 which would also be the date of the meeting. Ignatius Matengu, Simbwaye's nephew, apart from being a CANU youth was in fact staying with him at the time of the arrest. The Native Commissioner, Kruger, believes the meeting took place in the second half of August 1964. This is supported by Albert Mishake Muyongo, CANU's Vice President, in a biography he submitted to SWAPO and published in SWAPO's publication *Namibia News*, vol.3, No.1-3, January/March 1970, pp. 9-12. However, instead of a meeting, Muyongo tells us that it was more a mass protest demonstration (the biggest demonstration of its kind and the first in the Caprivi) covering the entire Caprivi Strip, and that the demonstrators marched on the headquarters of the South African Government at Katima Mulilo. This assertion could not be supported by any evidence, oral or otherwise. Similarly, Muyongo's assertion that CANU convened a conference in March 1964 where over 2,500 delegates from all corners of the Caprivi Strip attended could not be corroborated by any other source. He maintains that this is where CANU was born and where Simbwaye was elected President and himself Vice-President. It would be recalled that these elections took place in Brendan Simbwaye's house at the Holy Family Mission. Indeed it is doubtful that such a big gathering would be feasible at that time casting doubt on Muyongo's version.

⁵ Albert Mishake Muyongo incorrectly states in his biography cited above that Vernet Maswahu and Brendan Simbwaye were the ones arrested at the meeting. Contrary to this, Maswahu would join Simbwaye and Nalishuwa in detention after he was arrested on his way to take a petition (which was confiscated) to the United Nations in Lusaka. According to Adrian Waluka Simubali after the arrest of Simbwaye, they wrote a petition, which was given to Vernet Maswahu to take to Zambia. He was to depart with a WENELA (Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) vehicle going that way on the same day. As he left to wait for the vehicle at the Mission, one of his follow-

though people followed the police car, shouting and protesting, no casualties occurred during this event.⁶

The Trial of Brendan Simbwaye and his Co-accused

The case against Brendan Simbwaye and the two others, Vernet Maswahu and Alfred Tongo Nalishuwa, charged with holding a meeting without authority, was brought to court at Katima Mulilo.⁷ The court, attended by an unusually large crowd according to Kruger, was heard by Assistant Magistrate/Native Commissioner Bezuidenhout on the bench with Sergeant Hartman prosecuting and Kruger, as the administrative head, giving evidence that no authorization for the meeting had been obtained. Upon the charge being duly read and the accused called upon to plead, no answer was forthcoming upon which a plea of 'not guilty' would have been entered. The accused were then asked if they wished to put any questions. Simbwaye ignored the presiding magistrate and declared in a loud voice that 'he did not recognize the court, that they wanted to be tried internationally on an international level', continuing, 'that they would only submit to the United Nations'⁸. This statement was echoed by his co-accused. For this, the accused were immediately sentenced to one month's imprisonment for contempt of court without the option of a fine. At the end of the prosecution the accused declined to offer any statements, repeating their recognition only of the United Nations, upon which they were found guilty and sentenced.⁹ On the main count they were

ers, an informer, alerted the police who came and arrested him.

⁶ However, Kruger writes that UNIP published a far-fetched account of the brutality on the part of the administration with two men killed. Muyongo supports this by stating that two were killed after police opened fire and scores of others injured. He might have been the source of UNIP's report. Ernest Likando (1989, p.140) records violent clashes in which nine Black militants and two 'Boers' were killed. As stated, no evidence of such casualties has been discovered yet.

⁷ Adrian Waluka Simubali maintains that there was no court hearing held at Katima Mulilo for Simbwaye and the others. He stated that when they went to see Native Commissioner Kruger about the case, they were told to come back on a Monday for the hearing. On the appointed Monday, they were told by Black policemen that the three prisoners were smuggled out at night to an unknown destination. However, according to Simbwaye in a conversation with Advocate Israel Goldblatt on 2 October 1964, he was sentenced to pay a fine of £4 on each count of the case against him. This concurs with Kruger's assertion. It would seem that perhaps Mr. Simubali missed the trial or maybe the trial was held secretly, which is contrary to Kruger's assertion that it took place in 'open court'.

⁸ Kruger, in a Submission for Removal in terms of South West Africa Proclamation 15 of 1928 of Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye and Vernet Sibanda Maswahu, dated 15 August 1964. (BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II). A copy is in the possession of the author.

⁹ It appears from the charge sheet that the sentencing took place on 28 August 1964 in the Bantu Commissioner's Court, who was also the District Magistrate at Katima Mulilo in the Case No. 16/64 (NAN: File no. 1566, Storage Unit 1/1/12, Archival Group LKW 1/2/22, 1945 – 1969).

fined £2.00 for holding an illegal meeting and Simbwaye was fined another £2.00 for having left the country without a permit.

Before sentencing could take place, Kruger had already reached the decision to banish Brendan Simbwaye and Vernet Maswahu from the eastern Caprivi Strip. In a submission for presentation to the Minister arguing for the removal in terms of South West Africa Proclamation 15 of 1928, he exhibited a total dislike for Simbwaye whom he described as:

Generally obnoxious and trouble seeking ... aggressive in his talk and approach, recognizes no status in White officials, openly says (to Kruger) they will not have a Transkeian Bantustan here (in Caprivi). He declined to accept (at the court hearing) the Court's directions on procedure and his whole bearing was one of contempt. They are (with Maswahu) fanatical types with whom it is almost impossible to reason.¹⁰

Kruger felt threatened by the presumed importance of the new elite in society and the subsequent influence they might have on the people and events in Caprivi. In his memoirs he recalls his encounter with Brendan Simbwaye, 'I found him robed in some exotic cloak¹¹ and headdress sitting prominently outside on a chair offered by one of the staff as a gesture to his assumed importance ... [He] demanded [the] acknowledgement of [the] party or reason for not so doing. Refused to accept answer that no statement would be made at that time'.¹² He continues, 'He assumes flamboyant attire, robes, etc., and walks about with an assumed air of great importance'. At the adjournment of the court hearing apparently about 60 supporters (Kruger describes them as a mob) shouted and chanted and the behaviour was generally unpleasant 'with Simbwaye raising his hands in the air and waving in the style of a martyr and hero'.¹³

In an impromptu trip to Pretoria, Kruger reported on what had taken place in the Caprivi Strip and requested a Ministerial Removal Order against Simbwaye and Maswahu - to some 'suitable' (read far off) place elsewhere in South West Africa to follow on the completion of their terms of imprisonment until, as he would write later, 'common sense returned'.¹⁴ It was decided at that Pretoria meeting to approve Kruger's application for the three to serve their sentences at Grootfontein in South West Africa and not at Katima Mulilo where facili-

¹⁰ Most informants do not have this picture of Simbwaye however. They describe him as deeply religious, quiet, kind and more often than not, engaged in prayer. Slow to anger, in fact most do not remember him involved in an argument, not even with his peers or learners.

¹¹ Most informants describe Simbwaye's dress code as similar to Kwame Nkrumah's, who undoubtedly had a big influence on him.

¹² Kruger, *History of Caprivi*, p.6. See also submission for removal.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Kruger, 1982, p.18.

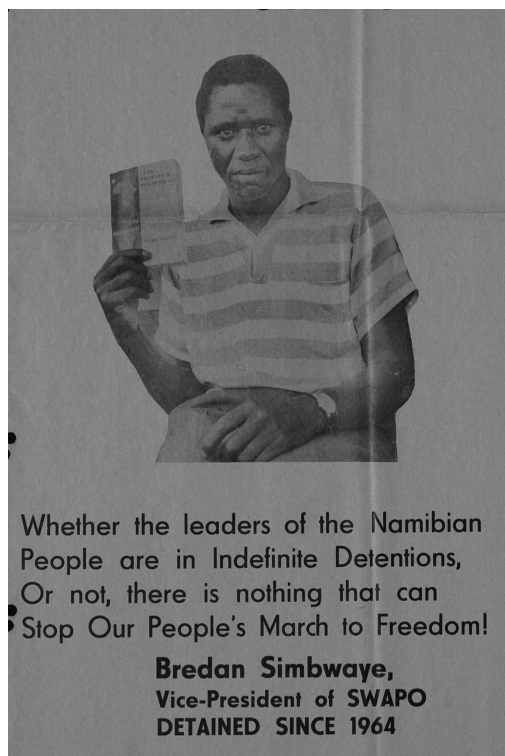


Figure 17: The only known photographic portrait of Brendan Simbwaye is found on a poster of the late 1960s, issued by SWAPO in Dar es Salaam. Simbwaye is holding up a well-known political study *'The peoples and politics of South Africa'*, by Leo Marquand

ties were inadequate. Before they could gather together the money for their fines, the three prisoners were taken by police from Rundu at the dead of the night at Manyeha crossing, (now Kongola, the boundary between the eastern and the western Caprivi Strip) to Grootfontein. At Grootfontein Simbwaye told Advocate Goldblatt, they were told that the sentences were for three months instead of one. He was handcuffed and taken to Windhoek where they served one month and then released.¹⁵ On their release from prison, a Ministerial Order of Removal was served on Brendan Simbwaye and Vernet Maswahu, whilst the third prisoner, Alfred Tongo Nalishuwa, was brought back under escort to the Caprivi, which he immediately left for Zambia.¹⁶

Below is the Order of Restriction served on Simbwaye by the Honorable Michael Daniel Christian De Wet Nel, Minister of Bantu Administration and Development of the Union Government:¹⁷

To Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye, a Native of the Masubiya in the district of Eastern Caprivi Zipfel in the territory of South West Africa.

WHEREAS I am satisfied that you are engaged in activities likely to undermine duly established authority and the maintenance of law and order in the district of Eastern Caprivi Zipfel in the territory of South West Africa, and to cause dissension, unrest, violence and lawlessness in the said district;

¹⁵ Simbwaye in a discussion with advocate Goldblatt on 2 October 1964, in Goldblatt: *Building Bridges*.

¹⁶ Even though Kruger believes he never returned to the Caprivi and that he was last heard to be somewhere in North Africa, Alfred Tongo Nalishuwa lived the rest of his life shuttling between Zambia and the Caprivi Strip for fear of being apprehended, which in any case occurred several times, until his death in an independent Namibia.

¹⁷ Extracted from a press release issued jointly by CANU and SWAPO announcing their 'merger' in Lusaka on 5 November 1964. (Copy in possession of author)

AND WHEREAS your said activities have resulted in a request from the Masubiya tribal authority for your removal from the said district of Eastern Caprivi Zipfel;

AND WHEREAS I am satisfied that your presence in, or at any place within easy access of the said district of Eastern Caprivi Strip in the territory of South West Africa is inimical to the peace, order and good government of the Natives in the said district;

AND WHEREAS I deem it expedient in the general public interest that you be removed from your present place of residence in the said district of Eastern Caprivi Zipfel;

NOW, THEREFORE, under and by virtue of the powers vested in me by paragraph (d) of section one of the Native Administration Proclamation, 1928 (Proclamation No. 15 of 1928) (South West Africa) read with section three of Eastern Caprivi Administration Proclamation, 1939 (Proclamation No. 147 of 1939) (South West Africa), I do hereby order you, the said Brandon Kangongolo Simbwaye, that within two days of the service of this order on you, remove yourself from your place of residence in the said district of Eastern Caprivi Zipfel to Ohopoho in the district of Kaokoveld in the territory of South West Africa, subject to the following terms, conditions, and arrangements:-

- a) At Ohopoho you shall reside at a place to be indicated to you by the senior officials of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development of Ohopoho.
- b) Until such time as this order is withdrawn you may not return to the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel except with written permission of the Secretary for the Bantu Administration and Development.

Given under my hand at Pretoria on the 24th day of September One Thousand Nine Hundred and Sixty Four

Minister of Bantu Administration and Development

As a general comment on the restriction order, it is misleading to suggest that the Masubiya tribal authority requested the removal of Simbwaye from the eastern Caprivi Strip, and indeed there is no evidence to suggest, support or confirm that this was the case. On the contrary, Kruger admits in his submission presented to the Minister requesting the restriction order to be issued that 'I have reason to think that the chiefs would favour their removal though they have not been directly asked'.¹⁸ The two days given to Simbwaye and Maswahu within which to report to Ohopoho meant that they did not return to the Caprivi Strip but were taken to their new place of abode at Ohopoho, the beginning of their life in perpetual detention.

¹⁸ Kruger, in a Submission for Simbwaye's removal, p.4.

The Simbwaye-Goldblatt-Kapuuo Connection¹⁹

Not much is known about the time the two men spent at Ohopoho except for Simbwaye's conversations with Advocate Goldblatt in Windhoek. On 2 October 1964 Simbwaye was accompanied by Clemens Kapuuo²⁰ to see Goldblatt, probably to get advice on the removal order. Goldblatt's conclusion was that indeed section 1 (d) of Proclamation 15 of 1928 read with section 3 of Proclamation No. 147 of 1939 permits removal and empowers the Minister to make that order and therefore the removal was perfectly 'legal'. As with many apartheid laws, the Minister was somehow placed above the law. Section 2 of the Proclamation (No. 15, 1928) had a provision stating 'that the Minister shall not be subject to any Court of law for or by reason of any order, notice, rule or regulation professed to be issued or made or of any other act whatsoever professed to be committed, ordered, permitted or done in the exercise of the powers and authority conferred by this proclamation.' Therefore it was futile for Simbwaye to launch a court challenge against the removal order.

Simbwaye and Maswahu were given R5 each with which to buy blankets, cloth, and R4 per month while at Ohopoho. Even though the Minister wrote to Simbwaye that close relatives could join him at Ohopoho and that items of personal property could be brought from the Caprivi Strip to Ohopoho at government expense, this promise seems never to have been fulfilled. In a letter to Goldblatt written while in the Windhoek Central Prison dated 18 July 1966, Simbwaye accused the government of rescinding on its promise. He had put in a claim on 10 October 1964 for books such as the *Universal Home Lawyer*, works on politics and government and a bookshelf to be brought from the Caprivi Strip; he never received a reply.

In the letter, he complains about a number of other things: that he is illegally and inhumanely restricted to Warmbad with no adequate supplies of food, that he had to resort to begging since the monthly £2 for food which the government provided was insufficient due to the high cost of living at Warmbad compared to the standard of living he had in the Caprivi Strip, that even though the government had bought one pair of trousers, one shirt, two small blankets at 14s each for him, he was not provided with shoes and had no bed. He retorts 'I have to use a sack as a blanket...And yet the law which had removed [me] from Caprivi Strip was supposed to compensate me in full'.²¹ Goldblatt adds that Simbwaye told him that he was badly beaten by the white police and had shown the marks and his torn shirt to the

¹⁹ The following is based mainly on information kindly provided by Dag Henrichsen, Basel, subsequently published in Goldblatt, *Building Bridges*.

²⁰ It is not known how Simbwaye and Kapuuo met, but Kapuuo might be the one who introduced Simbwaye to Advocate Goldblatt, as their subsequent contacts would show.

²¹ Simbwaye in a letter to Goldblatt dated 18 July 1966. (NAN: BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II)

magistrate.²² It appears that Simbwaye and Maswahu were starved as a way of forcing them into submission. In a meeting with an official of the Bantu Affairs Department, Advocate Goldblatt was told that Simbwaye could get employment under the government and would be paid R18 for working in the location doing unspecified work but apparently there was nothing that could be offered to him whereby his experience as a teacher could be made use of.²³ This was not to be for Simbwaye had already made known his stance to Goldblatt: 'The administration ascertains that I should get employment, and who can employ a politician?'²⁴

It is not known when or under what conditions Simbwaye and Maswahu were transferred to Warmbad. When Simbwaye found himself in the Windhoek Central Prison for a second time, he asked Captain Slabbert, the officer in charge, to write to Clemens Kapuuo, a prominent figure in the Herero Chief's Council and a leading opponent of the forced removal of the residents of the 'Old Location' in Windhoek. Kapuuo then sent a message to Goldblatt informing him that Simbwaye was in solitary confinement in the Windhoek Central Prison. When Goldblatt contacted the prison official to arrange to see Simbwaye, he was told that the instructions from Bantu Affairs were that Simbwaye was to receive no visitors.²⁵ With the assistance of an official at Bantu Affairs whom Goldblatt knew from previous interviews on behalf of Kapuuo, he convinced the prison official that he would see Simbwaye as a professional advisor and not a visitor. This was allowed only in the presence of a prison official and he was instructed to confine himself to discussion of Simbwaye's appeal. He was thus able to see Simbwaye for one and half hours on 27 May 1966 at 10 o'clock. The prison official explained that Simbwaye was not in solitary confinement but was kept separate from the other prisoners (as if there was any difference) as he was regarded as a political agitator, which was also the reason he had been removed from the Caprivi *Zipfel*. He was informed that providing Simbwaye behaved himself he would receive a remittance of two months off his sentence, which would render the appeal unnecessary and the application for bail pending appeal, useless.

On 14 October 1965²⁶ Simbwaye was sentenced in the Karasburg magistrate's court for common assault and malicious damage to property. He was given a jail term of 70 days of

²² Goldblatt Notes, 27 June 1966, in Goldblatt, *Building Bridges*.

²³ Goldblatt in a letter to Simbwaye dated 23 July 1966. (NAN: BAD, File No.V5, Vol. II)

²⁴ Simbwaye to Goldblatt, dated 18 July 2006. (NAN: BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II)

²⁵ Goldblatt Notes, 28 May 1966 entry, in Goldblatt, *Building Bridges*.

²⁶ Goldblatt records the date as 6 October 1965, in Goldblatt, *Building Bridges*. However, the date of sentence indicated on the court papers (docket), is 14 October 1965. Perhaps Simbwaye remembered the day on which the trial began and this is what he conveyed to Goldblatt. The docket papers are found in the National Archives of Namibia on file no. 1566, storage unit 1/1/12, archival group LKW 1/2/22, 1945 – 1969.

which the first four weeks were in solitary confinement and with a spare diet.²⁷ He served the jail term at the Keetmanshoop prison. As he would tell Goldblatt later, he was convicted for assaulting a woman, a sister.²⁸ The incident took place when the woman referred to tried to prevent Simbwaye from sitting in the 'whites only' section of a church in Warmbad. Simbwaye denied this, maintaining that he couldn't have gone to a Dutch Reformed Church in the first place since he was born a Catholic and had married a Catholic. He was discharged from Keetmanshoop prison on 4 December 1965 and went back to Warmbad. The same day, he was seen talking to some people who had come to his small hut. A white policeman came up to him at the time and demanded an explanation, however nothing came of this. Four months later, on 8 April 1966 he was again arrested on a charge of contravening Section 20 of Proclamation 15 of 1928 prohibiting the promotion of any feeling of hostility between Non Europeans and Europeans. He was accused of fomenting racial strife. Simbwaye explained during the trial that he was complaining about a lack of food and his poor living conditions in general, and answered the questions, which those present were asking him. A state witness, Constable Mteka, testified that Simbwaye was fighting the government, and that he uttered the following to those present:

Julle is te sleg, julle is toe. Julle moet vergaderings hou en saamstaan. Julle moet veg teen die boere. Julle kan klippe en ysters vat om te veg. Julle moet die boere met klippe vrek gooi. Ons sal Windhoek brandsteek en sal al die boere vrek maak. Die wat oorbly, sal onder ons werk, en self vir ons kinders 'baas' sê. Julle moet teen die witmense veg, en ons sal julle wapens gee. Januarie, sal julle ander dinge sien. Julle en die Roomse Vader is mos toe. Bantostan is dood, Angola, Sudwes-Afrika, Mossambiek en die Republiek sal in Januarie val.²⁹

[You are too bad, you are closed. You need to hold meetings and stand together. You need to fight against the Boers. You can take stones and iron in order to fight. You need to throw dead the Boers with stones. We shall burn down Windhoek and kill the Boers. Those who survive would work under us and address even our children with 'baas' (Master). You have to fight against the Whites and we shall give you weapons. In January you will see things differently. You and the Roman priest are closed. The Bantustan is dead, Angola, South West Africa, Mozambique and the Republic will crumble in January.]

²⁷ Bennett Kangumu, Archival Research Report: The life history of Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye, A missing SWAPO Vice-President, February 2006, p.11. (This report was submitted to the Steering Committee of the Archives of Anti-Colonial Resistance and Liberation Struggle, AACRLS, a project of the National Archives of Namibia.

²⁸ Goldblatt Notes, in Goldblatt, *Building Bridges*.

²⁹ Testimony of Constable Mteka, state witness in the prosecution of Simbwaye in the Karasburg magistrate's court, April 1966. For reference, see Bennett Kangumu, Archival Research Report, *op.cit*, p.10. Translated by Dag Henriksen.

He was sentenced to six months imprisonment on 14 April 1966 and sent to the Keetmanshoop prison where he served two months before being transferred to Windhoek Central prison. His case was sent for automatic review and was confirmed by Judge Badenhorst on 21 April 1966. While Simbwaye and Maswahu's banishment to Ohopoho was 'perfectly legal' according to Goldblatt, this seems not to have been the case with their removal or transfer to Warmbad, as no Ministerial Order was issued to this effect. Addressing this issue, Goldblatt wrote to Simbwaye:

If your removal was effected without an order by the Minister it is in my opinion illegal, and if you will be again removed, as you fear, to some other place, again without a proper order, it will also be illegal.³⁰

Simbwaye's fears were not without grounds, for the pair would shortly³¹ find themselves isolated on a remote farm (Halt Farm No. 379) near Welwitschia (now Khorixas) in the former Damaraland Reserve, probably in 1968 and most likely without a proper Ministerial Order.³² Fate would separate them there for Vernet Sibanda Maswahu was sent to the Windhoek State Hospital on 15 July 1969 on mental health grounds; no further trace was found of him after this date.

Simbwaye's stay in Damaraland was not welcomed, at least not by the Damaraland Bantu Affairs Commissioner, H.F.J. de Bruin. The Commissioner argued in several letters to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner in Windhoek and to the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development in Pretoria for Simbwaye to be removed from his jurisdiction. He declared that Simbwaye was politically active and had contacts with people of influence (judging from letters which passed through his office to and from people such as the Herero leader Clemens Kapuuo). Furthermore, he was fluent in Afrikaans and as Damara spoke Afrikaans he would easily influence them, especially learners at the High School with whom he mingled at the local stadium when he came to town. De Bruin added that the Damara Council had made representations to him on 25 April 1972 asking for the removal of Simbwaye, repeating the request they had made in June 1968 and stating that in any case if Simbwaye were permitted to travel to the Caprivi, he would immediately cross into Zambia

³⁰ Goldblatt to Simbwaye, dated 26 March, 1968 in Goldblatt, *Building Bridges*.

³¹ The earliest reference to Simbwaye in Welwitschia seems to be June 1968, when the Damara Council registered a concern with the Bantu Affairs Commissioner with regard to his presence in Damaraland. See for example Letter from Bantu Affairs Commissioner to the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development, dated 16 June 1972. (BAD, File No.V5, Vol. II)

³² No evidence found during my research indicates why Simbwaye and Maswahu were transferred from Ohopoho to Warmbad and Damaraland; neither was any reason given for their removal, most likely without a banishment order being issued.

where his wife was living. The police expressed concern about permitting Simbwaye to travel to the Caprivi Strip at this time, explaining:

Met die huidige situasie wat in die Oos Caprivi heers, is dit vanuit 'n veiligheidsoogpunt beskouw, glad nie gewens dat hy daarheen verwyder word, en weer by sy mense geplaas word nie. My hoofkantoor is daarmee eens dat Simbwaye in Damaraland moet aanbly soos aanbeveel, totdat die huidige politieke klimaat verbeter het.³³

[Given the present situation in East Caprivi, and from a security point of view it is not at all advisable to remove him there and again place him with his people. My headquarters agrees that Simbwaye has to stay in Damaraland as ordered and until the current policial climate has improved.]

Despite police reservations, and representations from the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner³⁴ against the move, the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development signed a permit for Simbwaye on 9 August 1972 to travel to Katima Mulilo through Rundu for a six-month visit. What was the reason for this? In 1972 the Caprivi Legislative Council was established and were mindful of the fact that the government was keen to make Simbwaye denounce the struggle and cooperate with the authorities. Perhaps they wished that such 'progress' towards 'self-determination' as they saw it, would win him over to their side. This theory was tested on Simbwaye by the Bantu Affairs Commissioner of Damaraland:

Ek het Brandon persoonlik al gevra wat hy dink van die Tuisland ontwikkeling. Hy het erken dat wat hy sien wat in Welwitschia gedoen word 'n goeie ding is maar dat hy nooit met die Hoofmanne in die Caprivi sal kan saamwerk nie, omrede hulle die Blanke regering steun. Hy verklaar egter dat indien hy ooit teruggestuur word hy liewers na Zambia toe sal gaan waar hy baie vriende het.³⁵

[I personally asked Brandon what he thought about the homeland development. He acknowledged that what he had seen having been done in Welwitschia is a good thing but that he could never work together with the chiefs in the Caprivi, because they support the White government. He rather declared that if he ultimately would be send back he would like to go to Zambia where he had many friends.]

Indeed, this is what he told people in the village in 1972, that the authorities had asked him to denounce politics in return for his freedom but that he had replied that 'he will never

³³ Letter from J.G. Myburgh of the South African Police to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner in Windhoek, dated 25 May 1972. (BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II) Translated by Dag Henrichsen.

³⁴ He did so again in 1972 arguing that there was no guarantee that Simbwaye would cease to work against the government of South Africa if permitted to go to Zambia. See letter dated 25 February 1972 addressed to the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development. (NAN: BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II)

³⁵ Bantu Affairs Commissioner for Damaraland in a letter to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner in Windhoek, dated 12 February 1971. (NAN: BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II) Translated by Dag Henrichsen.

stop, until when they cut and separate his head from the rest of his body will he keep quiet. That he doesn't see the future of the country the same way as the current rulers see it.³⁶

Another related issue, which might significantly have influenced the decision to send Simbwaye to the Caprivi could have been the visit of the United Nations Special Representative, Dr Alfred Escher,³⁷ to Namibia in October 1972. Part of Dr Escher's mission was to visit the eastern Caprivi Strip to ascertain facts on the reported massacre (discussed elsewhere in this chapter), which had occurred in October 1968, and political repression in general. However, there is no evidence to suggest that Simbwaye was presented to the UN official during his visit to the Caprivi Strip, or to suggest that Dr Escher enquired about him. In any case people were prevented from getting an audience with Dr Escher, two exceptions being the late Pax Imbuwa Sibungo and Mr. Solomon Puzeli,³⁸ both of whom were direct victims of the 1968 event. Apart from these two, Gilbert Mutwa secretly managed to hand in a document explaining the 1968 massacre and giving a broad overview of the general political climate in the Caprivi.³⁹

The conditions of the permit granted to Brendan Simbwaye specified that the visit was for six months only, that he should report to the Commissioner in the Caprivi and again in Welwitschia upon his return. He was under the impression that he would be taken back to Welwitschia, for he told people in the village how maize was growing in his garden and how worried he was since no one was taking care of the plants. This was never to happen. The police took him to the village apparently to say goodbye to his mother. They came back for him and that was the last time he was ever seen. It is not known whether he reached Katima Mulilo, or whether he was killed or indeed escaped, as the authorities claim. Since then, numerous stories about his disappearance or death abound.⁴⁰ What is known is that

³⁶ Personal interview with Pastor George Matali, a nephew of Brendan Simbwaye, at Kabbe (Caprivi), 16 April 2006.

³⁷ Dr Escher's report would be rejected both by SWAPO and the United Nations.

³⁸ Mr. Puzeli, who is still alive, lost his arm during the political repression in 1968.

³⁹ Likando, 'History of Caprivi', 1989, p.148.

⁴⁰ SWAPO's latest account is published in its book *Their Blood Waters Our Freedom: Glory to the Heroes and Heroines of the Namibian Liberation Struggle*, Windhoek: 1996. On page 317, there is the following statement about Simbwaye: 'According to the Simbwaye family, Brendan Simbwaye, was recorded as missing in 1964, was brought to his home village of Malindi by the South African Police in December 1971. He was permitted to spend a short period of time with his family and was then taken back into police custody. When subsequently informed that he was free however, he apparently demanded to be transported home and was taken by police vehicle to the Namibia/Zambia border and ordered to cross to Zambia. His last words were 'I am going but don't follow me'. He had barely walked a few metres when he was shot in the back. Simbwaye's body was apparently buried in Zambia, although his grave has never been identified. A different version was established during fieldwork. Most of the informants believe he is dead, that he was never buried because his body was thrown into the Zambezi river, this from a former policeman

he disappeared while on a visit to his home area and is presumed dead. No one knows how he died, where he was buried or, indeed, whether he was buried at all.

The final expulsion of CANU from the Caprivi Strip did not take the form of 'banning' the party, as is often remarked by activists and commentators⁴¹ alike. It has proved impossible to find proof of any official government regulation or directive banning CANU from the Caprivi Strip. However, the repression of the party took the form of widespread victimization of CANU leaders (with their dismissal from teaching positions at the Holy Family Mission schools). A harsh clampdown on CANU supporters and activities, followed as Fosse correctly observes, the non-violent, active and peaceful campaign had become 'too successful' for the authorities.⁴² Kruger himself concedes that 'certainly the agents (of CANU) had sold their prospectus to a good many who were seen to go along with them; some may not have been happy with what the future offered as they saw it'.⁴³

The first such clampdown occurred on the night of 28 August 1964 at Mafulo following the trial of Simbwaye and the two others. It was a clash⁴⁴ between the employees of the administration and CANU supporters. Apparently the former reacted to taunts accusing them of working for the white man. In the process, the CANU office and dwellings of CANU officials and supporters at Mafulo were set on fire, causing a great number of them to either cross the river into Zambia or flee Katima Mulilo to lie low in the villages. CANU supporters took refuge mainly at Katima Mulilo⁴⁵ (Northern Rhodesia), Sesheke and Mwandji.

Seizing this opportunity to cleanse the Caprivi strip of CANU, the administration held a series of meetings with traditional authorities and village heads to 'clear the air', or, as Kruger put it, 'to declaim against young men having been elevated to the status of all-wise, as

who is also a relative of Simbwaye and one who was present when they last took him from the village, which is Limbeza instead of Malindi as wrongly reported by SWAPO. The general consensus seems to be that he was killed by the South African Police. A different version was alleged by the *Allgemeine Zeitung* newspaper in 1980. Quoting an article in the *Johannesburg Star* newspaper, the AZ alleges that Simbwaye was killed by SWAPO.

⁴¹ See for example, Pütz, Von Egidy, Caplan, *Namibia Handbook and Political Who's Who*, Windhoek: Magus, 1989, p.44.; Fosse, 'Negotiating The Nation in Local Terms: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Eastern Caprivi, Namibia' (MA Thesis, Department and Museum of Anthropology, University of Oslo, 1996), p. 155.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Kruger, *History of Caprivi*, 1984, p. 21.

⁴⁴ Kruger describes it as an uprising by administration employees against CANU and the mob of supporters who remained at Mafulo.

⁴⁵ There is a place in Zambia with the same name, not far from Namibia's Katima Mulilo. Reference is made to Katima Zambia and Katima Namibia/Caprivi to differentiate these two Katimas.

might be deduced from the support CANU had received.⁴⁶ Fearing that CANU would now direct their activities from Zambia, the Commissioner wrote to Chief Maiba Moraliswani:

There are certain young men of CANU who, as you know, have been creating trouble here, doing and saying things to try and poison the minds of the people against the government. You will understand that we cannot allow this sort of thing to go on. Recently they started trouble at the Mafulo village but when our men turned on them they ran away to Katima Mulilo in Northern Rhodesia. Now I hear they have moved to Mwandu and it is believed they will try to cause trouble in the Caprivi by crossing at or near Schuckmansburg. My policemen are being instructed to arrest them if they cross over for they are wanted here to answer to the things they have done. I shall be glad if you will send an *Induna* (headman) with the police car that is going to Schuckmansburg and arrange that the Silalo (district) Induna there and trustworthy village heads and people will assist my men if they ask for it.⁴⁷

The additional magistrate, Mr. Bezuidenhout and the Sergeant of Police, Mr. Hartmann, departed for Schuckmansburg to seal the Caprivi-Northern Rhodesia frontier against CANU insurgency. In letters sent to Bantu Police Guards (BPG), they were instructed to go to this frontier 'about certain work I wish you to do in connection with CANU troublemakers'.⁴⁸ This marked the end of CANU in the Caprivi Strip, a movement that did not live beyond its official launch. It would join SWAPO in exile, in a 'fateful merger', that eventually saw the expulsion in 1980 of nine CANU members from SWAPO. Included in these was Albert Mishake Muyongo.

The 1968 Singalamwe (Mayala village) Massacre

With the dispersal and detention of CANU leaders and the flight of its supporters, police brutality was directed against ordinary inhabitants of the Caprivi Strip who were expected to provide information about CANU, now in an alliance with SWAPO. Following the death of Tobias Hainyeko (the first PLAN commander) near Namwi Island at the Zambezi River in Caprivi Strip on 18 May 1967, the clampdown was stepped up. It culminated in apartheid South Africa's monumental brutality in Caprivi Strip, the infamous and much publicized Singalamwe Massacre of 1968.⁴⁹ Information about this massacre first came to the atten-

⁴⁶ Kruger, *History of Caprivi Strip*, 1984, p.21.

⁴⁷ Kruger, in a letter to Chief Moraliswani Maiba, dated 8 September 1964. (AN, LKM 3/3/3, File No. N1/15/2).

⁴⁸ Letters sent by the Native Commissioner, Kruger, to the following Bantu Police Guards: Senior BPG Anderson Manwela, BPG Robert Ntelamo, and BPG Bonaventure Sambi, dated 8 September 1964. (NAN, LKM 3/3/3, File No. N1/15/2)

⁴⁹ The latest acknowledgement of this massacre, the first in independent Namibia, was made by President Hifikepunye Pohamba of Namibia in an address to the nation responding to the de-

tion of the world in a testimony presented to the *Ad Hoc* Working Group of Experts of the Commission of Human Rights by Peter Katjavivi, then SWAPO Representative in the United Kingdom and Western Europe. According to Katjavivi, the massacre took place in October 1968 when the South African troops killed approximately 63 people. In the process, 350 people were arrested and 2000 forced to flee the area. Of the 100 babies that accompanied their parents in the flight to Zambia, 53 died of starvation and disease on the way. The massacre allegedly happened in the following manner:

First the headman of the village was dropped from a helicopter, as a warning of what would happen to anyone who withheld information about SWAPO freedom fighters or who gave support to the freedom struggle. Next the area was strafed and bombed, and then troops moved in, using fixed bayonets on anyone still alive in the village – thus adding a further chapter to the South African mission of civilization in Namibia.⁵⁰

In his memoirs, Kruger acknowledges the flight of the people as a result of this incident even though he does not mention the massacre. His version⁵¹ is that a group of ‘terrorists’ entered at the locality in the Caprivi Strip where Namibia, Angola and Zambia have a common beacon. This group ransacked Finaughty’s shops at Singalamwe and Sibbinda. The police force then reacted quickly in pursuit and seeking out possible local collaborators. Regrettably, he adds:

Numbers of villagers down at the Mashi left their homes to cross the border northwards, either into Angola or Zambia there to remain, amongst them Mano of Nkongola, ... and also Wankie.⁵²

mands of the Committee of Ex-PLAN Combatants which is putting pressure on government for compensation for their role in the liberation war. He happened to repeat mention of the massacre at Katima Mulilo on August 26, 2006, during commemorations of Heroes Day. A critique of this massacre is to be found in Kenneth Abrahams’s Film Review of ‘This is Namibia’ by Per Sandén and Peter Berg, from Swedish TV, of 24 May 1978. In an attack, almost personal, on Sandén, Kenneth Abrahams accuses him of being a well-known SWAPO camp-follower who functioned as semi-official SWAPO representative in Stockholm while the then representative, Ben Amathila was away. The Singalamwe massacre appeared in Sandén’s film ‘The Liberation Struggle in Namibia’ which appeared in 1974. While Abrahams acknowledges that the massacre might have taken place after Cassinga, nobody doubts that such things occurred. He argued that the film produced no convincing evidence and was full of inherent inconsistencies, which were never resolved. For Abrahams, the showing of two skulls could not be regarded as evidence. But there are witnesses to this massacre who are still alive. For example, Mr. Puzeli, mentioned above, lost his arm in one of these 1968 so-called security sweeps in the Caprivi strip. While Kenneth Abrahams accused Per Sandén of blurred objectivity because of his close association with SWAPO, he could also be accused of not being objective in his assessment of whether the massacre took place because of his dislike of SWAPO after he fell out of favor. He was writing in 1978 in *Namibia Today*.

⁵⁰ *Namibia News*, Vol.7, No.6/7, June/July 1974, p.4.

⁵¹ Kruger, *History of Caprivi*, 1984, pp. 24-25.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.25. For a discussion of this incident at Finaughty’s shops, see also Likando, ‘History of Caprivi’, 1989, p.145.

A Swedish television team from Sveriges Radio consisting of two reporters, Per Sandén and Rudolf Spee of TV2 allegedly visited the Caprivi Strip six years later at the invitation of SWAPO. The reporters offered an interview to a staff reporter from the *Argus* Group Office in London, who travelled to Stockholm in an attempt to establish the veracity of the report. They claimed to have been in the Caprivi Strip during January and February 1974. One night Peter Nanyemba took them to the massacre site near Kalonga where they saw around 30 skeletons lying about. Even though



Figure 18: Remains of Mayala village, site of the 1968 Singalamwe massacre in the Caprivi after a visit by the South African forces, which apparently petrol-bombed the village using helicopters. Photograph provided to SWAPO by a Swedish Television Team

they refused to be drawn on whether there were any shallow graves, signs of violence or anything pointing to unnatural death, they revealed that they had found remains of huts, cooking utensils and skeletal remains above the ground. Some remains showed signs of being burnt, as did the surrounding bushes and vegetation.

Apparently Nanyemba told them that the massacre took place during September 1973, and not in October 1968 as alleged by Katjavivi, who explains the confusion about the dates by alleging that there had in fact been two massacres, one in 1968 and the other in 1973.⁵³ This security sweep claimed the lives of Simeon Muyongo (Mishake's father), Judea Lyaboloma, Benjamin Bebi Mamili and Maxwell Kulibabika while others such as Pax Imbuwa Sibungo⁵⁴ were left in a mentally disturbed state.

⁵³ Correspondence from the South African Legation in Stockholm to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs in Pretoria, dated 24 July 1974. See also telegram from the Department of Foreign Affairs in Pretoria to the same in Cape Town, dispatched on 30 July 1974. (NAP, File No. TES 2751, F11/243)

⁵⁴ He was charged with holding an illegal meeting and was given a suspended sentence. Kruger, *History of Caprivi*, 1984, pp. 24-25. *Ibid.*, p.25. For a discussion of this incident at Finaughty's shops, see also Likando, 'History of Caprivi', 1989, p.145. Correspondence from the South African Legation in Stockholm to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs in Pretoria, dated 24 July 1974. See also telegram from the Department of Foreign Affairs in Pretoria to the same in Cape Town, dispatched on 30 July 1974. (NAP, File No. TES 2751, F11/243)

CANU: 1964 and after

The arrest of Simbwaye in 1964 threw CANU into a total state of confusion, 'we didn't know how to proceed; we didn't have a clear beginning'.⁵⁵ The remaining leadership decided that the logical course would be to follow up on the talks with Sam Nujoma of SWAPO that Simbwaye had initiated. This task was given to Albert Mishake Muyongo and Crispin Mulonda who departed for Lusaka in September 1964.⁵⁶ Once in Lusaka, Mishake Muyongo wrote a letter to Sam Nujoma in Dar es Salaam asking him to meet for talks.⁵⁷ According to Muyongo, this meeting took place between himself, Sam Nujoma and Jacob Kuhangua, then Secretary-General of SWAPO,⁵⁸ while Sam Nujoma writes that he met Muyongo, Crispin Mulonda and Joseph Nawa and '...repeated my proposal for uniting the two parties, and we finally formalized the merger of SWAPO and CANU under the name of SWAPO'.⁵⁹ The 'merger' was announced in Lusaka on 5 November 1964 in a joint press statement by CANU and SWAPO. It was signed by Albert Muyongo (Vice-President of CANU) and Sam Nujoma (National President of SWAPO). The press statement read in part: ⁶⁰

We the under-signed members of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and Caprivi African National Union (CANU) do hereby declare that, for the interest of our people and freedom and independence of our Fatherland South West Africa CANU and SWAPO cease to exist as separate organizations. We further resolve that CANU and SWAPO merge and unite as one organization with the following aims and objectives:

- a) To fight relentlessly for the total liberation of South West Africa from the yoke of South African imperialism;
- b) To foster the ideal of Pan-Africanism and to rally the African masses into a cohesive national organization;
- c) To strive for the creation of true democratic Government in South West Africa, a government that would serve the interest of all the people of our country irrespective of their color, race, ethnic origin, religion or creed.

⁵⁵ Adrian Waluka Simubali, personal interview, 16 April 2006.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Mishake Muyongo, in a Biography submitted to SWAPO, in *Namibia News*, Vol.3 No.1-3, January/March 1970, p.11. Note that Muyongo does not state that he was sent by the CANU leadership to follow up on the talks, and in fact he does not mention that the talks had already been initiated by Simbwaye. He presents the initiative as solely his: 'realizing the need for national unity in the struggle to free Namibia, wrote a letter to Sam Nujoma, the President of SWAPO who was then in Dar es Salaam Tanzania, asking to meet him for talks of a united front.'

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Nujoma, Sam, *Where Others Wavered*, p.136.

⁶⁰ Extracted from a joint press release by CANU and SWAPO of 5 November 1964, signed by Muyongo and Nujoma, p.5 (Copy in possession of author).

Following the 'merger', Simbwaye was made Vice-President of SWAPO. Since he was under arrest inside the country, Mishake Muyongo was appointed as Acting Vice-President in his place.⁶¹ According to later CANU leaders, some party members rejected the merger between the two parties.⁶²

The importance of this 'merger' needs some clarification. Did SWAPO really need CANU? Apart from the fact that unity of the Namibian people for a common cause was a prerequisite for a successful campaign to overthrow the South African regime from Namibia, internationally both SWAPO and SWANU were canvassing for support, especially from the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. This support depended firstly on unity within national liberation movements and, secondly, on how representative such an organization was of the people in a given country. With the formation of the OAU Liberation Committee, willingness to take up arms became important. Until this time SWAPO had not yet been officially recognized as the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people by the United Nations.

CANU was important to SWAPO in two other ways. It had a good and well-established relationship with UNIP of Zambia through contacts such as Munukayumbwa Sipalo (UNIP Secretary-General) and Mundia Nalumino (a former teacher in the Caprivi Strip together with Simbwaye) who went on to become Zambia's Prime Minister in the government of Kaunda. The support of Zambia, the only independent African country sharing a frontier with South West Africa, was crucial to the logistical development of the Namibian armed struggle. That frontier comprised the Caprivi Strip and this area would play a crucial role in the early and formative years of the armed liberation struggle, as Nujoma would remark in 2001:

Since many of these comrades were living along the Zambezi River, they were especially skilled in rowing canoes. They made important contributions to the struggle by imparting

⁶¹ It is unclear who else from CANU got positions in SWAPO as a result of the merger. Two others, Lemmy Matengu and Jackson Mazazi Lukonga were described at the time of their dismissal from SWAPO in 1980 as former members of the SWAPO Central Committee (SWAPO Information Bulletin, No.4/80, July 1980, p.4). It is not clear whether the agreement was that the Vice-Presidency would always be reserved for CANU within SWAPO as long as the 'merger' existed.

⁶² Fosse, 'Negotiating The Nation in Local Terms', 1996, p.155. There was a misunderstanding as to the functioning of the merger. Some CANU members believed that the party still existed as an entity within SWAPO while another group believed that the two organizations were supposed to dissolve to form a new organization, with a new constitution and under a new name. This misunderstanding, according to Likando, led to the arrest and detention of Gilbert Mutwa of CANU in Tanzania's Maximum Prison (Likando, 'History of Caprivi', 1989, p.142). Likando writes that on 29 November 1965 a Commission was appointed and assigned to explore ways to solve the impasse and more especially to recommend amendments to the constitution and review structures to accommodate CANU's concerns. He does not tell us what became of this Commission, and, in any case, this could not be verified by any other source.

their skills to their fellow freedom fighters. Thus SWAPO fighters were enabled to cross the Zambezi, Kwando and Kavango rivers into the interior of the country with their arms and ammunition.⁶³

The alliance would eventually collapse in July 1980 when Mishake Muyongo and eight others, Lemmy Matengu, Jackson Mazazi, Ignatius Matengu, David Mutabelezi, Dennis Kachilombwa, Ernest Likando, Benjamin Mabuku and Calvin Songa were expelled from SWAPO at the Extra-Ordinary Session of the Central Committee of SWAPO held from 17 July 1980 at (N)Dalatando,⁶⁴ Kwanza Norte, in Angola. They were apparently expelled for engaging in 'counter-revolutionary and secessionist activities aimed at dismembering Namibia's National territory. They have actively been advocating and organizing for the breaking away of our Eastern Region – Caprivi - from the rest of the country.'⁶⁵ In a lengthy editorial in its mouthpiece, *SWAPO Information Bulletin*, SWAPO castigated Muyongo:

On one hand, he was happy to occupy the position of Acting Vice-President of SWAPO and enjoy the authority and prestige that went with that position and on the other hand, Muyongo was not ashamed to indulge himself in tribal and regional activities. Specifically, Muyongo had always sought to build up a personal following within SWAPO on a tribal basis. He wanted and expected all SWAPO members from Namibia's eastern region of Caprivi to be loyal to him personally and to regard him as their tribal, rather than national representative within the SWAPO leadership. Those Caprivi members of SWAPO who failed to demonstrate personal loyalty to Muyongo had to face tribal ostracism or exclusion from his personal favor. Muyongo was always hesitant to make personal sacrifice when that was demanded of him in the interest of the liberation struggle of Namibia. It can be recalled, for example, that when the Provisional Headquarters of SWAPO were located in Dar-es-Salaam in the early 1960s, Muyongo preferred and actually opted to stay with his family and friends in Lusaka. Again, when he was recently confronted with a unanimous decision of the Central Committee to shift his residence from Lusaka to Luanda where the Movement's Provisional Headquarters are now located, he refused to do so.⁶⁶

⁶³ Nujoma, *Where Others Wavered*, p.137. For a detailed discussion on the role of the Caprivi Strip in the Namibian Liberation War, see Chapter Five..

⁶⁴ Two spellings are provided in one publication, Dalatando and Ndalatando.

⁶⁵ Declaration of the First Extra-Ordinary Central Committee Meeting of SWAPO held at Ndalatando, Kwanza Norte in the People's Republic of Angola from 17-19 July 1980, in *SWAPO Information Bulletin*, No.4/80, July, 1980, pp.3-4.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.1

The 'New CANU'

Muyongo and his accomplices did not attend the Central Committee meeting to answer to the charges levelled against them.⁶⁷ He issued a press statement on 7 August 1980 in which he announced the revival of what Richard Kapelwa called 'a tribal and regional mini-party known as CANU' to 'fight for the liberation of Itenge – the term he used when referring to the Eastern Region – and not Namibia'.⁶⁸ Now that CANU was a 'tribal mini-party', it is not clear whether the expulsion of Muyongo meant the scrapping of the merger of 1964. What is clear, however, is that many CANU supporters continued with the war for liberation under the banner of SWAPO. According to Muyongo, repeated charges of discrimination and tribalism, the suppressed role of CANU in SWAPO and disagreements with the SWAPO leadership over strategies in negotiating with the Western Contact Group, SWAPO and South Africa, after the passing of UNSCR 435 in 1978, were some of the sore points in his relationship with SWAPO.⁶⁹ He accused the SWAPO leadership of failure to deal adequately with internal problems and predicted severe problems for SWAPO.

It was to be his revived CANU that would soon be engulfed by severe problems. No leadership was chosen at the time of the revival of the party. Attempts to do so were seen by Muyongo as undermining and subversive. This led to the sidelining of his two top aides, Chibeya Siseho Simasiku and Lemmy Matengu, whom he accused of plotting to assassinate him.⁷⁰ Zambia refused to acknowledge an official CANU presence and Muyongo returned to the Caprivi in June 1985 through the Ngoma Border Post, possibly from Senegal.⁷¹ A CANU party congress held in May 1982 elected a leadership, which Muyongo refused to accept. This led to his first expulsion from the party. He was readmitted in 1985, but expelled again

⁶⁷ Even though invitations were extended to all members of the Central Committee to attend Muyongo, together with two others, Lemmy Matengu and Jackson Mazazi, both members of the Central Committee, refused to attend this Extra-Ordinary Session of the Central Committee convened specifically to deal with documents which 'revealed' the intention of Muyongo to secede the Caprivi from the rest of Namibia. Likando maintains that the reason they did not attend was that they they received information they were going to be murdered (Likando, 'History of Caprivi', 1989, p.150).

⁶⁸ Richard Kapelwa, 'Letter to the SWAPO Regional Chairman of Eastern Caprivi', in *The Combatant*, vol.11, No.3, October 1980, pp.13-15. At the time, Richard Kapelwa was Deputy Secretary of Defence and Member of the political Bureau of the Central Committee of SWAPO. He is from the Caprivi Strip. At independence, he served as Namibia's first Minister of Works, Transport and Communications. Richard Kapelwa passed away in May 2007 and is the first 'Caprivian' to be buried at Heroes Acre in Windhoek.

⁶⁹ Fosse, 'Negotiating The Nation in Local Terms', 1996, p.155. See also Pütz, Von Egidy & Caplan, 1989, *Namibia Handbook*, p. 90.

⁷⁰ Likando, 'History of Caprivi', 1989, p.157.

⁷¹ Likando claims that Muyongo was deported to "Senegal from Zambia in 1984, 'History of Caprivi', 1989, p.161.

shortly afterwards over the question of a merger with the DTA. In 1985 CANU's application to join the Multi-Party Conference (MPC) was rejected. Muyongo then reconstituted the Caprivi Alliance Party (CAP) into the United Democratic Party (UDP) and led it into the DTA. After some internal squabbles, CANU split and joined with other parties, NPF and UDF, to enter into elections under UN Resolution 435 so marking the end of an era.

Summary

The discussion in chapters seven and eight focused on the ways in which the people of Namibia's Caprivi region responded to the creation and consolidation of the Caprivi identities. These identities were constructed during the period of state formation and were premised on the assumption that since the people of Caprivi Strip 'have not affinities either of language or blood or otherwise with other South West Africa natives' and since they occupy a different geography, they should be administered separately and indeed, have a separate identity from that of the rest of South West Africa/Namibia.

The people learnt over time to work with, around and against the imposition of these identities on their lives. They did this through the medium of traditional elites and institutions. For the most part, colonial administration in the Caprivi Strip was persuasive and indirect – preferring to use traditional institutions to subjugate the people. Traditional elites acted as agents of the successive colonial administrations and with the rise of regional nationalism, competed with the intelligentsia, mainly teachers, for the control of the masses. In its quest to silence dissent, specifically by CANU, the administration claimed that it was preserving tradition or 'duly constituted authority', that is, the rule of the chiefs through which its subjugation found expression. This inevitably created friction between the traditional elite and the nationalists.

This ambivalent response is illustrated by the attempts made by South Africa in the mid 1940s to incorporate South West Africa as a fifth province. A referendum was held in the Caprivi to decide on this issue. Even though the result shows consent, a closer examination revealed that people were not clearly informed of the difference between 'incorporation' and continuation of South African rule. Given the options, they chose to continue under the 'Union Flag', but sounded a warning that 'we do not know what lies in the future but if things do not please us we will complain'. People rejected a 'Lozi' identity and a return to Barotseland domination, declaring that they looked upon such a return with 'fear'. Part of the reason for the emergence of the concept of Caprivianness was the belief held by the people of the Caprivi that they were more 'Lozi' than South West African due to historical factors, language and cultures. This did not, however, imply their willingness to return to

Barotseland. As I have demonstrated above the residents of the region rejected the identity of being Lozi.

The discussion examined the Odendaal Commission public hearings that were held at Katima Mulilo (Caprivi) over two days in February 1963. A fundamental shift was noted. Instead of the general grievances of the 1940s and 1950s directed mainly at government officials in the Caprivi Strip for not allowing people to buy arms and ammunition, restrictions on killing of game, and lack of stores and markets for the disposal of cattle and the usual call for their transfer, there was a vocal and unanimous call for the withdrawal of the South African Government from the Caprivi Strip. Interestingly, this came from the traditional elite (chiefs) who served as South Africa's medium of power dissemination, for the Commission refused to meet any other group except Europeans resident in the Caprivi Strip. Their recommendations were a roadmap for the consolidation of the Caprivi identities through the establishment of a legislative council (1972) and subsequently a Caprivian government (1976).

Lastly, the discussion examined in great detail the rise of regional nationalism in the Caprivi Strip, specifically the formation of the Caprivi African National Union (CANU). CANU constituted the most organized association to emerge from the Caprivi Strip and challenge South African rule. The response of the administration to the rise of CANU was swift. The party did not survive in the Caprivi Strip beyond its first public meeting. A harsh clamp down on its leaders and supporters alike left many such as Brendan Simbwaye in detention and many others on the run. Police brutality in what was regarded as security sweeps aimed at the population resulted in a massacre in 1968 in which scores of people were killed, while others fled into neighbouring territories.

This dispersal of CANU leaders and supporters would aid the nationalists in their quest to dismantle the Caprivi Identity. Once outside, they joined forces with SWAPO and acknowledged that their struggle was part of a broader cause to free the rest of South West Africa of which they were an integral territorial component and that they should form part of a nascent 'Namibian Identity'. Consequently, this would open the Caprivi Strip as a strategic front for the Namibian liberation war. A regional cause which started with CANU's desire to deconstruct the Caprivi Identities, as constructed by South Africa, and create a new identity of 'Caprivianness' took on a national outlook, with the war against South Africa, not only in the Caprivi Strip but throughout Namibia, making use of the Caprivi Strip strategically and militarily.

Similarly, the banishment of Brendan Simbwaye and Vernet Maswahu to other parts of South West Africa put them in touch with nationalist leaders such as the Herero leader Clemens Kapuuu. By removing them to Ohopoho (Opuwo), Warmbad and Welwitschia

(Khorixas), the administration exposed them to a greater South West Africa this indirectly aiding their crusade to dismantle the view of Caprivi as constructed by those powers that had previously subjugated or ruled the region, and finally start the process of integrating it into South West Africa.

9 Secession: The Identity of People as ‘Caprivians’ and not Namibians

In the early hours of the morning of 2 August 1999 separatist rebels calling themselves the Caprivi Liberation Army (CLA) launched armed attacks on a Police station, army base and NBC (Namibia Broadcasting Corporation) building at Katima Mulilo. Five officers and three soldiers were killed, while five separatists were killed and eight captured.¹ The group fighting for the secession of the Caprivi region was led by former SWAPO Acting Vice-President and leader of the former official opposition party, the DTA (Democratic Turnhalle Alliance), Albert Mishake Muyongo, now leader of the UDP (United Democratic Party). Muyongo and his group reportedly wanted Caprivi to secede from Namibia as he felt there was nepotism and tribalism in the SWAPO-led Government and that the four northern regions of Oshikoto, Oshana, Omusati and Ohangwena (formerly Ovamboland) were being developed at the expense of other regions.² During 1998 and early 1999, scores of people, including the marginalized San, fled the Caprivi into neighboring Botswana as refugees fearing repercussions after the government unearthed a scheme to secede the Caprivi from Namibia. The Namibian government requested Botswana to extradite those responsible but this request was turned down for fear that the refugees’ human rights might be violated if they were returned. The two governments agreed to the voluntary repatriation of refugees. Scores have since returned. While the Namibian Defence Force managed to quell the resistance in just a few hours, the issue of secession is still very much alive in Namibian courts over nine years later, where over a hundred suspected secessionists are still being tried for treason, sedition, murder and the illegal possession of firearms.

At the heart of secessionist attempts is the battle for a ‘Caprivi Identity’, as Muyongo put it: ‘We are Caprivians ... Nobody will make Namibians out of us – not even by force’.³ The

¹ On their website (see below) the secessionists dispute the number of casualties provided by government and other sources. According to the information of those who were in Mpacha military base and those who were arriving in the morning, very few survived. At Wenela (WNLA) military base and Katima Police station many more were killed; whilst another three were killed at the Katima Mulilo shopping centre and at the Katounyana (Special Field Force) Base. The secessionists’ claim could not be verified by any other source. At best it appears to be propaganda aimed at the international community.

² Crispin Inambao, ‘Governor joins Caprivi Exodus: Botswana launches manhunt’, in *The Namibian*, <http://www.namibian.com.na/netstories/November98/caprivi2.html>, accessed on 3 March 2007.

³ Brigitte Weidlich, ‘Muyongo hits out at Govt: Charges not even force will deter secessionists’, in

intention to occupy the NBC radio station was to announce 'that Caprivians were no longer considered Namibians, but Caprivians'.⁴ Those being tried for treason questioned the Namibian courts' jurisdiction to try them since they were not Namibians. The Caprivi Identity now becomes a spatial or geographical one of having one's own identity in what was (at least historically) one's own territory. For the secessionists, the question of Caprivi 'is not of secession, it is a question of that area regaining its original status as a country'.⁵

Following the advent of secessionist attacks on government installations at Katima Mulilo on 2 August 1999, Maria Fisch published a useful, albeit historical, justification of secession in the Caprivi Strip, *The secessionist movement in the Caprivi: A historical perspective*.⁶ Therein lies the question to be examined in this chapter, namely does secession in the Caprivi Strip have a historical basis?⁷ And if so, which history? I will argue that the secessionist movement in the Caprivi Strip has a historical construction or perspective as Fisch contends (mainly built up by apartheid South Africa), but that secession does not have a historical basis or justification as the argument on which it is based is flawed in many respects and is largely the history of Lozi subjugation in Caprivi. Rather, I conclude, the Caprivi Identity is a normal process of 'negotiating the Namibian nation in local terms',⁸ which is a blend of ethnicity and nationalism; secession being an extreme expression of this process.

This chapter critically examines the basis for secession in the Caprivi region. This rests primarily on two arguments, the fact that Caprivi has 'historically never been' part of Namibia and the fact that SWAPO, then a liberation movement, pledged (in 1964) to allow 'Caprivians' to attain self-rule at independence. The third motivation for secession, often mentioned, that of the underdevelopment or neglect of the Caprivi region by the SWAPO Government, will be discussed only in minor detail.

The Namibian, 11 September 2006, p.1.

⁴ History: Caprivi Zipfel: The controversial strip (Part III), posted on 23 August 2005, at: www.caprivifreedom.com; <http://www.caprivifreedom.com/news.i?cmd=view&nid=818>. Website accessed on 20 November 2006. This is the official website of the Caprivi secessionist movement.

⁵ History: Caprivi Zipfel, the Controversial strip (Part II). *Ibid*.

⁶ Fisch, Maria, *The secessionist movement in the Caprivi: A historical perspective*, Windhoek: Namibia Scientific Society, 1999.

⁷ This is really Fisch's argument.

⁸ Expression borrowed from a thesis title by John Leif Fosse, 'Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Eastern Caprivi (MA, Oslo), 1996.

A Peripheral Identity: Caprivi Under Colonialism

A prosecution witness in the second treason trial, Sackey Akweenda,⁹ described the Caprivi region as a creation of colonialism, 'its peculiar shape the result of deals and treaties that colonial powers – Germany, Portugal, Great Britain and later South Africa – concluded with each other'.¹⁰ It is this peculiar shape that apparently became the curse of the Caprivi, as it rendered it difficult to administer and resulted in the territory being tossed from one administration to the other. Some academics described the colonial creation of the Caprivi Strip '... as one of the most bizarre results of the scramble for Africa.'¹¹ Others concluded that the Caprivi represented an unfortunate anachronism which should have been amputated from the former South West Africa at the creation of the League of Nations Mandate after World War One and assigned to Botswana and Zambia.¹² It is this line of argument that feeds the secessionists' thinking, namely that historically the Caprivi never belonged to Namibia.

My argument in this chapter is that Caprivi was part and parcel of South West Africa after 1890, but it was kept on the periphery of mainstream political, cultural and social events in greater South West Africa. In this context one might well ask which country in Africa has borders that are not a creation of colonialism and, in Southern Africa, which country avoided the imperial expansion and border drawing of the British, Germans and Portuguese?

The 'self-governing homeland' status between 1972 and 1980 when the Caprivi had its own national anthem, flag, coat of arms and a constitution was the high point of the Caprivi Identity (read secession). It was, however, the long period of isolation and the special status of the Caprivi, which accounts for feelings of 'Caprivianness' as opposed to 'Namibianness'. Three events accounted for the integration of 'Caprivians' into mainstream Namibia before independence: the liberation war, the Turnhalle Conference and AG8, legislation that introduced the three-tier ethnic system of central, regional and local government. Even then, as it is argued here, the Caprivi was never independent during this period. It was just closer to South Africa than to the rest of Namibia, which was referred to as South West Africa, that is, as some country other than their own.¹³

Territorially, Caprivi remained part of Namibia throughout its colonial history. The reason the Caprivi was withdrawn from the Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration was

⁹ Author of *International Law and the Protection of Namibia's Territorial Integrity: Boundaries and Territorial Claims*, The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1997.

¹⁰ Werner Menges, 'Second treason trial provides a lesson on border history', *The Namibian*, 21 November 2006, p.7.

¹¹ Pretorius, J., *The Fwe of Eastern Caprivi: A study of their historical and geographical background, tribal structure and legal system, with reference to Fwe family law and succession* (MA: Stellenbosch) 1975:47.

¹² Logan, 1968, 25 quoted in Fosse, 'Negotiating The Nation in Local Terms', 1996, p. 179.

¹³ Fosse, 'Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms', 1996, p. 178.

that the Mandates Commission 'discovered that the territory was being administered by the wrong power' and demanded that it revert to South Africa. The German-Portuguese Treaty of 30 December 1886 and the Anglo-German Treaty of 1 July 1890 defined the territorial boundaries of Namibia. In terms of the mandate that was granted to South Africa, any changes to the boundaries of the territory that South Africa was to administer, had to be approved by the League of Nations. There is no evidence to suggest that any step to alter the status of the Caprivi in relation to the territorial integrity of SWA was brought about during colonial rule. The Namibian Constitution states that the national territory of Namibia shall consist of the whole of the territory recognized by the international community through the organs of the United Nations as Namibia. According to Akweenda, this would include the Caprivi Strip.¹⁴ Therefore the secessionist argument that Caprivi has historically never been part of Namibia is difficult to accept.

This directs the search for the basis of this argument to the pre-colonial period. A logical starting point is the secessionists' presentation of their history, which they date back to 1600 with the Caprivi being part of Bulozhi or the Lozi Kingdom. The Lozi were defeated by the Makololo of Sebetwane in the late 1820s but were able to regain control of the region in the early 1860s (see chapter two). This state of affairs remained until Europeans appeared on the scene in the 1890s. According to this history, the Caprivi was never an independent entity and therefore for the secessionists to advocate its independence on historical grounds leads one to ask the question which history?

It is apparent that it is the history of the Lozi, and indeed, according to the Masubiya, the ruling Mamili dynasty that wants to revert to Lozi suzerainty in the Caprivi. According to Fisch, Muyongo actively promoted the slogan 'Revival of the Lozi culture in Caprivi' during the final years of his political career.¹⁵ This is not surprising in light of the following. Firstly, the Mafwe Chieftainship, the ruling Mamili dynasty to be specific, are descendants of a Lozi representative in Caprivi, Simataa (Imataa) Mamili, who was posted to Caprivi in 1864 to guard against the return of the Makololo and others such as the Matebele of Mzilikazi. It was Simataa Mamili whom the Germans found at Linyanti in 1909. They made him chief of the Mafwe, which included all other non-Subiya speaking inhabitants of the Caprivi. Therefore the secessionist movement is really grounded in Lozi nostalgia by the descendants of Simataa Mamili in Caprivi.

The second is the claim of Barotse support for the secessionist cause in Caprivi. It was reported in the media at the time of the secessionist attack on Katima Mulilo that the Lozi of

¹⁴ In Werner Menges, 'Second treason trial provides a lesson on border history', *The Namibian*, 21 November, 2006, p.7.

¹⁵ Fisch, 1999: 22.

Zambia's western province were crossing into the Caprivi to 'help separatist rebels fight for the region's secession from Namibia', a leader of the Barotse Patriotic Front (BPF), Imasiku Mutangelwa was quoted in Lusaka.¹⁶ Mutangelwa called on 'all Lozis worldwide to contribute materially to the cause of the Caprivi secessionists', adding, 'We are ready to defend our democracy, brothers and the UN charter'.¹⁷ The Caprivi rebels who attacked Katima Mulilo are believed to have entered Namibia from southwestern Zambia. Mutangelwa argued that the Lozi of Zambia had been fighting for their 'independence' since Zambia's independence. Rendering support to the Caprivi secessionists was really intended as a wake-up call to President Fredrick Chiluba of Zambia. In fact, Mutangelwa warned the Zambian Government at the time to 'take a leaf' from what was happening in Caprivi. When Mutangelwa was served with an order to report to the police over statements he had made that Zambian Lozis¹⁸ were moving into Namibia to reinforce Caprivi secessionists, he sought refuge at the residence of the South African High Commissioner in Lusaka and requested South Africa to grant him political asylum.

Lozi cultural influences are not very welcome in Caprivi, as can be seen from the following lengthy quote provided by Fosse, taken from a letter to the editor of *New Era* about the origins of the Siyomboka dance:

Allow me to comment on an article in your recent edition which suggested that Caprivians no longer perform siyomboka. First, I would like to state that the person who made this claim is not a Caprivian, and cannot pass himself as an expert on Caprivian cultures. The person who made this claim is actually a Zambian and he should be told that Caprivians will not allow cultural influences from his land of origin, especially if such influence has the potential to undermine our traditional way of living as inherited from our ancestors. This said, I would like it known that Caprivians are a people with a rich traditional base and who show respect to their customs and beliefs. And contrary to the author's claim, the siyomboka was never popular nor was it traditionally taught to people in Caprivi as the author claims. Rather, it came into Caprivi, especially into the Musanga area where the author is known to have family attachments, from the other side of the Zambezi. And the question is: What has a Zambian dance got to do with Caprivian cultural way of living, birth, growing up, education and marriage system? Caprivi has prominent tribes which have different traditions as well as foundations of respect:

- The Mayeyi tribe has a traditional dance called Shibboli;
- The Masubiya tribe has a traditional dance called Sipelu;
- The Mafwe tribe has a traditional dance called Muyaluke;
- The Mambukushu has a traditional dance called Umpera.

¹⁶ Tabby Moyo, 'Claims on Barotse support surface', <http://www.namibian.com.na/Focus/Caprivi/barotse.htm>, posted on 4 August 1999. Accessed on 5 March 2007.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Secessionism is a minority interest in Western Province of Zambia as it is in Caprivi.

Namibians have a responsibility to defend their traditions, and to protect such traditions from neighbouring countries.¹⁹

What becomes important is the reaction of other groups in the Caprivi, apart from Lozi and the Mamili lineage, to secession. In an article that appeared in the local media on this issue, 'Secession of Caprivi a minority interest',²⁰ the writer quoted Chief Liswani III of the Masubiya:

A group of people from one village (Linyanti) cannot say they own Caprivi and, apart from Mamili, they didn't even consult the other chiefs about their plans.... (Emphasizing that none of his subjects had joined Muyongo's group, the chief added) It is only from the Linyanti area and a few individuals from Kongola, but no one from the Subia tribe has run away.²¹

In a letter to a local daily newspaper, a reader assessed support for the secession in Caprivi as follows, 'It is a well known fact that the ill-advised ambition of secessionism is entertained in only one or two out of the six constituencies in the Caprivi Region. Even in those one or two constituencies it is doubtful whether most people there support the idea of secessionism. The democratic principle dictates that the minority conforms to the wishes of the majority. The same is true of the few secessionist minded people in that region. It is a pity they cannot be wished away.'²²

Limiting the support for secession to the Linyanti area needs further contextualization and brings in an interesting aspect of identity formation in Caprivi. Conflict exists within the Mafwe over what constitutes a genuine and 'true' Mafwe. As shown in a quotation from a letter writer in a previous chapter, a distinction is usually made between Mafwe residing at Kongola, Choi, Sesheke and Singalamwe (taken to be true Mafwe)²³ and those inhabiting the Linyanti – Chinchimane – Kanono area, usually referred to as Mbalangwe. As the writer says, 'The people of Namibia must be made to understand that Chief Mamili and Mishake Muyongo are not Mafwe, but Mbalangwe ... the Mbalangwe clan's association with the Mafwe people is dubious in nature ... Mafwe elders should clearly explain to us, the young

¹⁹ 'Siyomboka is not Caprivan' by Lawrence M. Simbilu. Letter to the Editor, *New Era* 28 September – 4 October 1995, in Fosse, 1996: 181.

²⁰ Chrispin Inambao, 'Secession of Caprivi a minority interest', at <http://www.namibian.com.na/netstories/november98/caprivi8a.html>, accessed on 5 March 2007.

²¹ Actually one Subia man, Mr. Tawana of Nakabolelwa, who had long connections with the DTA, is known to be among the secessionists facing treason trial in the High Court.

²² Benjamin Chika Mabuku, 'Response to Mr. Chrispin Matongo's Secessionist Outbursts', in *New Era*, 15 September 2006, p. 11. This is ironic because, as shown in Chapter Six, this letter writer was among those expelled from SWAPO in 1980, together with Mishake Muyongo, precisely for allegedly nurturing a secessionist agenda. Perhaps it is possible in the Caprivi Identity to switch from being Namibian to being Caprivan and then back to being Namibian again.

²³ It is this group which has formed its own chieftaincy, the Mayuni or Mashi Traditional Authority.

generation, their association with a tribe which speaks a mixture of Lozi and Subia.²⁴ This is what Anton Bredell had to say about the Mbalangwe language: 'It is a sociolectal variety of Cisubiya [Subiya] and that Mbalangwe is the name applied to Cisubiya speakers residing in the Mafwe area.'²⁵ There is a close interrelationship between the Masubiya and Mbalangwe, to the extent that Mbalangwes are taken to be Masubiya residing in Mafwe areas. This corroborates the claim by the Masubiya chief that people living in villages surrounding Lake Lyambezi such as Lusu, Masokotwane, Zilitene (Kwena), Machita and Silumbi, who consider themselves Mafwe, were once all his subjects.²⁶ Fosse concludes, 'the Masubiya also provided the present ruling dynasty of the Mafwe'.²⁷ Kruger (1963:3) actually says Simataa is a 'Musubia placed by the Malozi as headman in the western area and who had assumed the name Mamili from his Mukololo predecessor'.²⁸ This shows that secessionist support in Caprivi is the concern of a clan, the descendants of the Lozi Simataa Mamili.

A major argument in this section has been that secession does not have a historical justification since the history on which it is based is foreign and not 'Caprivian'. This history is unacceptable to other groups in the Caprivi, particularly the Masubiya. It would be recalled from chapter two that the Subia assisted Sebetwane of the Makololo to cross the Zambezi on his way to conquer the Lozi and that the Lozi revolution against the Makololo in 1864 was centred in the Subia area. When the Makololo were overthrown and the Lozi kingdom restored, the Subia indicated to the Lozi that they became autonomous with the end of the Makololo authority. This led Sepopa, then Lozi King, to descend on the Masubiya and force a great number of them to flee to Botswana in about 1876. The Masubiya therefore loathe any attempt aimed at restoring Lozi rule in the Caprivi. The close association of secession to Loziness would automatically exclude them from participating.

If secession does not have a historical justification, what accounts for the actions of the secessionists? At least two factors are responsible for secessionist tendencies in Caprivi. The first is that it is a South African construction due to the special status (read peripheral) the Caprivi was accorded during the liberation war, and the second has to do with the political fortunes and misfortunes of one person, Albert Mishake Muyongo, who has successfully manipulated the existing tribal tension between the Mafwe and Masubiya to aid his checkered political career. The result is that Mafwe feel marginalized by the present government

²⁴ 'Mafwe suffer unfair abuse' by Michael Allan Munyandi, *New Era*, 16-22 June 1994.

²⁵ Anton Bredell, in Maho, *Few People, Many Tongues*, 1998, p. 51.

²⁶ *New Era*, 29 June – 5 July 1995, quoted in Kangumu, Bennett, 'The Land Dispute between the Mafwe (Fwe) and Masubiya (Subia): An historical contextualization' (unpublished manuscript, 2007).

²⁷ Fosse, 1996: 106. The original citation is from Pretorius, 1975:22.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

but importantly, they believe this is because of misinformation from the Masubiya.²⁹ Is secession therefore an extension of the tribal feud between the Masubiya and the Mafwe?

South Africa's Construction of Caprivi Secession

The Caprivi enjoyed a special status due to its geopolitical potential for the apartheid regime in Pretoria. To recapitulate: Caprivi was squeezed between Angola, where Portuguese colonialism had crumbled and SWAPO opened another front in its liberation war; Zambia, which acted as a logistical hub for many liberation movements in Africa (SWAPO, ANC, ZAPU), Zambia's Western Province not only bordered Angola, it provided SWAPO with a number of bases and transit (retention) camps; and Botswana, which provided an alternative transport corridor, particularly rail transport, for heavy cargo into the Caprivi Strip. Supplies of both men and equipment criss-crossed the Caprivi during this period. The area became a sophisticated military base for South Africa from which to launch attacks on Zambia and Angola at the same time as it was a transit point for SWAPO fighters.

The presumed special status of the Caprivi influenced the nature of South Africa's power dissemination in the area where it aimed to maintain what Flint terms a 'clientelist population'.³⁰ Such a population was to be different in many respects to other population groups in the mandated territory of South West Africa. Firstly, the great divide between the Masubiya and Mafwe became the hallmark of administrative policy; they had equal status by right, which was bequeathed by their common Lozi ancestors. Secondly, that it was only colonial intervention which disrupted their 'Loziness' in 1909 when the Germans set up an administration at Schuckmannsburg. This colonial process, Fisch argues, ensured that 'indigenous groups that bore no ethnic, linguistic or historical relationship to other Namibian tribes were incorporated into German South West Africa'.³¹ This has been the basis for Caprivianness, leading to a desire for secession, the curse of being different. Amazingly, adherents of 'Loziness' in the origin of Caprivi inhabitants chose to ignore the fact that the Mbukushu of Kavango, for example, migrated from the Caprivi leaving a number of their members behind.

It was, however, counterproductive for apartheid South Africa to place too much emphasis on this Lozi connection given that SWAPO was housed in Zambia. The Caprivi was to be

²⁹ 'Mafwe will not stand idle', *New Era*, 20 February 2007.

³⁰ Flint, L, The construction of clientelist identity in Caprivi, north-eastern Namibia, 1960-1985 (Research proposal, undated, copy in the possession of the author). It is not known whether this research was carried out.

³¹ Fisch, 1999:7.

brought closer to Pretoria but allowed to develop on its own, which was really the construction of isolation. Drove of officials, including the Prime Minister and his ministers, visited the Caprivi more often than before, especially during the preparation of the case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) brought by Ethiopia and Liberia against South Africa. As noted elsewhere, the Caprivi was presented as a model Bantustan at this time. The two chiefs and their delegation were accorded a visit to the Union of South Africa. Furthermore, scholarships were given to 'Caprivians' to further their studies in South Africa. It is during this period that the identities of 'Caprivianness' were consolidated. This consolidation involved a transition from Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* (ECZ) of the 1930s through the 1960s to the East Caprivi of the 1970s during the establishment of the East Caprivi Bantustan (Homeland). Eventually its inhabitants were referred to as 'East Caprivians' or 'Caprivians', as in the 'Administration for Caprivians' (AG8).

When it dawned on South Africa that Namibia would have to be allowed to succeed to independence, the idea of Caprivi as an independent state was given serious consideration. It could offer South Africa a vantage point to watch and influence political events in neighbouring independent African states. In the words of Flint, 'the South African regime renewed Streitwolf's policy of creating a separate colonial constituency but hybridized it so that Caprivi could become a friendly 'independent' satellite of South Africa in what was rapidly becoming a very unfriendly region for Pretoria'.³² The *Windhoek Advertiser*³³ reported that the secession of the Caprivi area and the formation of an independent 'state of Itenge'³⁴ were discussed at a meeting between the South African President Botha and the two Caprivi tribal chiefs. This was linked to the move by the Rehoboth Bantustan leader to declare the area a 'republic' thus excluding it from the conditions of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 435.

The other option considered by South Africa at the time was to sabotage a SWAPO victory at the UN supervised elections. Once again with the Caprivi was at the centre of such an endeavour since it bristled with South African military personnel. The creation of a rebel group along the lines of UNITA³⁵ in Angola and Renamo (MNR) in Mozambique was considered in order to destabilize a future SWAPO Government. The South African government apparently approached Mishake Muyongo about the scheme, which would have in-

³² L. Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa: Citizenship and Subjectivity in Barotseland and Caprivi', in *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2. (2003), p. 420.

³³ Of 3 January 1989. See also *The Namibia* of 25 November, 16 December 1988; and one for 13 January 1989.

³⁴ Name of a pre-colonial Subia kingdom.

³⁵ National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

corporated members of 101 Battalion that operated in the former Ovamboland area to give a semblance of a broader base.³⁶ It is not surprising that the Caprivi secessionists received both equipment and training from UNITA, as reported by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and other media.³⁷ The Caprivi Strip had been the key supply route for UNITA rebels especially by apartheid South Africa. As noted in an earlier chapter, UNITA had a military base in western Caprivi, and so the involvement of outside paramilitary forces in Caprivi is not new. In 1987 the British media³⁸ reported that South Africa was preparing a 200 strong mercenary unit for attacks on the frontline states and exiled Namibians and South Africans using a 'terrorist' force that contained former Rhodesian Selous Scouts, members of the SA-backed FNLA³⁹ and UNITA forces in Angola, former members of the Portuguese PIDE (secret police) and members of Koevoet. According to the reports these forces were being assembled at the Katima Mulilo military base in the Caprivi Strip where they were well placed for attacks on most of the frontline states; they were supported by three companies of the SADF.

Given the above, it is argued that secession in Caprivi is a direct product of the South African occupation in that it was this occupation that created and emphasized local notions of identity that served to alienate local people from other groups in Namibia. It is these localized notions of identity that are expressed as secession in the post-colonial era. Indeed, this is where one should look for the causes of secession, instead of the pre-South African colonial era normally projected as historical, social and cultural differences between 'Caprivians' and other Namibians.

Mishake Muyongo and Caprivi Secession

Caprivi secessionism, usually described as having historical origins, is actually a South African construction, emanating out of the interventionist policy of aggression in Southern Africa during the 1980s. Albert Mishake Muyongo was central to the South African plans that conceived Caprivi as a separate independent state at the implementation of United Nations Resolution 435. The Caprivi secession is therefore, it is argued here, tied to the political fortunes and misfortunes of its leader, Albert Mishake Muyongo. To support this assertion,

³⁶ INON (International News on Namibia), No. 66, February 1989.

³⁷ Quoted by XINHUA News Agency, 'Angola's UNITA Implicated in Namibian Unrest', at <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-55357402.html>.

³⁸ *Morning Star*, 27 June 1987 (published by the Communist Party of Great Britain); and the BBC of 27 June 1987.

³⁹ Front for National Liberation of Angola.

this section will briefly examine Muyongo's political career as well as his traditional (royal) heritage. The latter is in answer to the question of 'how Muyongo, one single individual, could have succeeded in influencing so many people with his ideas and persuading them to take up arms – even though, realistically, a secession of the Caprivi from the rest of Namibia had no chance of succeeding'.⁴⁰

There is no better place to study the political career of Mishake Muyongo than his own autobiography that he submitted to SWAPO at the 1969 Tanga Consultative Conference when he was made acting vice-president of the movement.⁴¹ This will be supplemented, and to some extent contrasted, by information extracted from the website of the secessionists illustrating their reading of history in: 'Caprivi Zipfel: The controversial strip – (part one)'.⁴²

In his autobiography Muyongo traces the cradle of his political consciousness to Kilner-ton College near Pretoria where he was preparing for his university entrance. On arrival he found that Afrikaans was one of the prerequisites for entrance to a University in South Africa and since he did not study Afrikaans in the Caprivi (Latin was studied in its place at the Catholic Mission School), he approached the Principal of the college and requested to be allowed to do Latin in place of Afrikaans. This was turned down. He took Afrikaans but apparently passed with very low marks. In 1962 he was due to commence his university education at Roma College (Pius XII University College) in Basutoland (Kingdom of Lesotho) but as he states, his '... political consciousness had reached such dimensions that he could not hold it in check any more'.⁴³ As a result, he contends, the '... South African authorities, in April 1962, virtually deported him from South African territory'.⁴⁴ He disputes the fact that CANU was formed in the Caprivi, claiming that it was formed in Mafikeng on his initiative after having been influenced by the politics of South Africa, together with Mason Liseli Mamili, George Mutwa and Charles Mubuyaeta Mubiana, 'who welcomed the idea with open arms'.⁴⁵ Back home in 1962, Muyongo secured a teaching position at the Kanono

⁴⁰ Fisch, M., *The secessionist movement in the Caprivi*, 1999, p.40.

⁴¹ Published in *Namibia News* vol. 3, No. 1-3, Jan/March 1970, pp. 9-11.

⁴² Posted on June 16, 2005, at www.caprivifreedom.com, accessed on 20 November 2006.

⁴³ 'Biography of Muyongo', in *Namibia News* Vol. 3, No. 1-3, Jan/March 1970, p. 10.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Political History of Caprivi, at www.caprivifreedom.com, *Op. Cit.*, p. 2. It is stated on this website that when the four came home for their holiday, they spread the idea in the whole Caprivi, and that the name (CANU) which Muyongo proposed in Mafikeng in 1961, was endorsed in 1963. A contradiction in the dates appear. In his biography, Muyongo writes that he went to Mafikeng in 1963 and not 1961, the year in which he supposedly proposed the name CANU at Mafikeng. In any case, it was established from other informants in Chapter Six that CANU was already in existence by this time, albeit as an underground organization.

Bantu Community School. It was at this school that he reportedly established a teachers' union, the African Teachers' Union, purportedly the 'first African organization of its kind – in the Caprivi Strip' and became its first president.⁴⁶ A few months after its formation the 10 teachers that comprised the union went on strike demanding higher pay. The school remained closed for five days until the School Board succumbed to the demands of the protesters. To remove him temporarily, Muyongo reports that the school offered him a bursary in 1963 for a teacher's training course in Mafikeng, South Africa, where he remained until the end of 1963. When he returned he was offered a teaching post at his former school, Katima Mulilo Mission School.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, events in the Caprivi were moving very fast. CANU canvassed for support from village to village until most people understood their objectives. Muyongo reports that it was after this 'canvassing' that a conference was convened in March 1964 'representing every corner of the Caprivi Region of Namibia' and was attended by about 2, 500 delegates. He further states that 'it was here that the Caprivi African National Union (CANU) was born' where Simbwaye was elected as the President and himself as Vice-President.⁴⁸ Muyongo's exposition ends with what he calls 'the first test of strength between the South African Government and CANU [that] occurred in August of the same year (1964)'.⁴⁹ He continues:

In ... mass protest demonstrations, covering the entire Caprivi Strip, CANU challenged the authority of the South African Government. Brendan Simbwaye and Mishek led these demonstrations from the very beginning. Finally, they marched on the headquarters of the South African Government at Katima Mulilo. It was the biggest demonstration of its kind and again, the first, in this region of Namibia. There were clashes between the crowd and the South African Police. The Police opened fire and two people were killed. Scores of others were injured. Simbwaye and Maswahu were arrested (they remain in detention to date).⁵⁰ Mishek Muyongo escaped to Zambia. This was in September 1964.⁵¹

Much of what is quoted above on Muyongo's political *curriculum vitae* as presented to SWAPO in 1969 could not be supported by any other source, written or oral. It is difficult to appreciate why South Africa would 'virtually deport' him in 1962, only to allow him back

⁴⁶ 'Biography of Muyongo', *op. cit.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* This incident is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six.

⁵⁰ At the time of writing in 1970. While Simbwaye's whereabouts remain unknown, we know that he was permitted to visit Caprivi in 1972, from where he disappeared. As for Maswahu, he was transferred from Welwitchia (Khorixas), on medical grounds, to the Windhoek State Hospital, where research still needs to be conducted to establish whether he was discharged from there and, if so, to where, or whether he ever left the hospital at all. His whereabouts also remain unknown.

⁵¹ 'Biography of Muyongo', in *Namibia News* vol. 3, No. 1-3, Jan/March 1970, pp. 10-11.

in the country the following year, especially after organizing a teachers' protest strike that purportedly disrupted classes for five days. Surely the authorities would have taken cognizance of the formation of this 'first ever African Teachers' Union'. The facts surrounding the formation of CANU have been dealt with in a previous chapter.

Muyongo was certainly part of the group that founded the movement, but the claim that he initiated it in Mafikeng remains unsubstantiated. Nor is there any record, oral or otherwise, of a conference organized in Caprivi during this period attracting 2,500 delegates. In fact, it is unimaginable that it would have been allowed to take place, while the claim that CANU marched with Muyongo and Simbwaye at the forefront on the headquarters at Katima Mulilo, to 'challenge the authority of the South African Government' is also disputed.

Instead of a protest march, as claimed by Muyongo, CANU organized a public rally at Mafulo, near Katima Mulilo, at which the party was to be launched by its president, Brendan Simbwaye who was arrested before this could happen. In fact most informants do not even remember whether Muyongo was present at that meeting or not, and if he were how he evaded arrest, being a senior member of the party, remains unclear. There is another contradiction relating to his escape to Zambia. While his biography states that he went into exile in September 1964⁵², the official website of his movement reports that he left on the night of 2 August 1964, after security forces 'pounced on a meeting called to discuss the arrest of Brendan Simbwaye...'.⁵³ Does this show a willingness to celebrate 2 August, on which date the secessionists attacked Katima Mulilo in 1999? The information provided in the résumé to SWAPO seems, therefore, to have exaggerated his role within the initial organization of CANU, probably to cement his position in the movement but also to show that he had the qualities and credentials to take the place of Simbwaye within CANU. Biographies and autobiographies are important tools in determining a person's nationality. It is interesting to note that Muyongo in his 1969 biography throughout refers to the 'Caprivi Region of Namibia'. At this time, he would agree, he was a Namibian – even before the Republic of Namibia was established!

Once outside (in Lusaka), Mishake Muyongo wrote a letter to Sam Nujoma, the President of SWAPO, who was then in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) asking him to meet for talks.⁵⁴ The meeting took place in Lusaka where Sam Nujoma repeated the same proposal to unite the two parties that he had made to Simbwaye.⁵⁵ Those present, according to Muyongo, were

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁵³ www.caprivifreedom.com *Ibid.*, p.3

⁵⁴ 'Biography of Muyongo', in *Namibia News* Vol. 3, No. 1-3, Jan/March 1970, p. 11.

⁵⁵ www.caprivifreedom.com. *Ibid.*, p.3; Nujoma, Sam, *Where Others Wavered*, London: Panaf, 2001, p.136.

himself, Sam Nujoma as President of SWAPO, and Jacob Kuhangua, then Secretary-General of SWAPO.⁵⁶ Nujoma's account includes Crispin Mulonda and Joseph Nawa as part of the CANU delegation to these talks.⁵⁷

Nujoma and Muyongo both agree that CANU and SWAPO entered into a 'merger' which was announced on the 5 November 1964 in Lusaka.⁵⁸ The secessionists maintain that the CANU leadership did not want this merger, and that SWAPO had to use the influence of the Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda and Nalumino Mundia to convince them.⁵⁹ Fosse repeats this claim. He states, without naming his sources (apart from saying that the information came from the 'later CANU leadership'), that a large majority within the party rejected the alliance between CANU and SWAPO.⁶⁰ Flint quotes a statement made to the press in December 1964 by CANU's regional secretary in Livingstone, Mr. F.M. Siomunyi, 'the people of Caprivi are not struggling for their independence to join up with any of their neighbours ... We are dedicated to the freedom of Caprivi alone. When we are free, it will be up to the people to decide whether or not to join any country'.⁶¹

Where Nujoma and Muyongo's views diverge is on the functioning of the alliance and, secondly, on the interpretation and constituent elements of the 'merger agreement'. For Nujoma, the agreement formalized the merger of SWAPO and CANU under the name of SWAPO.⁶² CANU believed that it existed as an independent entity in SWAPO or at least that if the two organizations were to merge into one, their constitutions should be reviewed and a new one drafted to pave the way for a new party with a different name. According to Fisch, undoubtedly quoting Muyongo, it was agreed that the organizations 'should either exist together under a new name, or CANU should retain its name and identity'.⁶³ In reality, CANU was absorbed into SWAPO.

Questions still remain as to the exact nature of this 'alliance' on which no light is thrown by the press release announcing the 'merger'. For example, how did it come about that the vice-presidency of SWAPO was given to CANU? And most importantly, what were the

⁵⁶ 'Biography of Muyongo', published in *Namibia News* Vol. 3, No. 1-3, Jan/March 1970, p. 11.

⁵⁷ Nujoma, *Where Others Wavered*, p. 136.

⁵⁸ A copy in my possession.

⁵⁹ [www.caprivifreedom.com File:///E:\Caprivi Freedom - History II.htm](http://www.caprivifreedom.com/File:///E:\Caprivi%20Freedom%20-%20History%20II.htm). *Ibid.*, p.3.

⁶⁰ Fosse, J.L., 'Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms', (MA, Oslo), 1996, p. 155.

⁶¹ F.M. Siomunyi, in *Central African Mail*, Friday December 4 1964, p.2, in Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa', 2003, p. 420. It could not be established whether indeed Mr. Siomunyi was CANU regional secretary. Nor does Flint provide the context in which such a statement was made, whether it referred to the merger between SWAPO and CANU or some other neighbours who might have made overtures to CANU.

⁶² Nujoma, *Where Others Wavered*, p. 136.

⁶³ Fisch, *The Secessionist Movement*, 1999, p.18.

terms and conditions? Also, was the position to maintain CANU as long as the alliance was in force? What is telling here is the fact that the president of CANU held this position for a long time in *absentia*, during which time his deputy acted in his place. The secessionists allege on their website that one of the provisions in the agreement was that, 'If the first President comes from SWAPO, then CANU must automatically produce the vice president and vice versa'.⁶⁴ According to Likando, the misunderstanding as to the functioning of the 'alliance' resulted in clashes at the Kongwa camp (Tanzania) that led to the detention of George Mutwa, one of the CANU leaders.⁶⁵ This is supported by Samson Ndeikwila who, in contributing to the debate on arbitrary detentions in the liberation movement, states:

The history of arbitrary detentions among Namibians in exile started in 1965 in Tanzania with the detention of George Mutwa and Alfred Tongo Nalisa, the leaders of the Caprivian group at Kongwa. Their complaint was that the Caprivians were being discriminated against and not regarded as full SWAPO members. After the two were released from detention, SWAPO disowned them and they made their way to Kenya.⁶⁶

It appears that the mistrust between the two main ethnic groups in Kongwa camp, the 'Caprivians' and 'Ovambos', continued into the late 1960s, as can be seen from one of the demands of a group in the Kongwa Military Training Camp. They wrote a strong memorandum to the SWAPO political leadership in Dar es Salaam in 1968, 'Thirdly, we demand that the rift between the two main ethnic groups, Ovambos and Caprivians, at Kongwa Military Training Camp be brought to an end'.⁶⁷ This mistrust is what is reconstituted as 'Ovambo tribalism' mainly by the secessionists, but also by some scholars.⁶⁸

A cause for considerable disagreement between Nujoma and Muyongo and a major basis for secession were the terms of the 1964 'Agreement', in which SWAPO allegedly made an undertaking that the Caprivi would be granted either special status or complete autonomy after Namibia's independence. 'Instead of being asked whether we want to be part of Namibia or not, the Namibian government imposed themselves on Caprivians. It is therefore that the Caprivi case is [a] question of forced occupation. The Namibian government never honored their end of the bargain', so the secessionists argue.⁶⁹ SWAPO, through its president

⁶⁴ www.caprivifreedom.com, p.3. *ibid.*

⁶⁵ E. Likando, *The Caprivi Strip: A Historical Perspective*, 1989, p. 142 (Unpublished manuscript, in the author's possession).

⁶⁶ Samson Ndeikwila, in a letter sent to *The Namibian* Newspaper, dated 14 October 2006, p. 2 (copy in my possession).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁶⁸ See, among others, Fosse (1996:155); Fisch (1999:19-20); Likando (1989: 142-164).

⁶⁹ File://E: E. Likando, *The Caprivi Strip: A Historical Perspective*, 1989, p. 142 (Unpublished manuscript, in the author's possession). *Ibid.* Samson Ndeikwila, in a letter sent to *The Namibian* News-

Sam Nujoma, who was the co-signatory to the agreement, refutes this version of events, saying that there was always an agreement for one nation.⁷⁰

Nujoma's version of events is supported by a press statement issued on 5 November 1964⁷¹ announcing the 'merger'. SWAPO argues that Mishake Muyongo was a member of the Constituent Assembly that drafted the Namibian Constitution, and never mentioned the now controversial promise regarding the Caprivi's status after independence. 'At best, Mr. Muyongo could have supported the idea propagated then by the late Kaptein⁷² Hans Diergaardt to make Rehoboth an independent entity within Namibia. Of course, even the DTA could have dumped and replaced him with someone with a Namibian agenda.⁷³ Muyongo defends himself as below:

The question that the Caprivi case was not mentioned in parliament is in the first place not correct, because on numerous occasions the president of UDP reminded the SWAPO party to honor their agreement. It is also on record that one Caprivian parliamentarian was almost suspended from parliament just because he said he represented Caprivians. In fact any Caprivian who mentioned the idea of a merger was often labelled a tribalist and received a harsh opposition from SWAPO.⁷⁴

The above sentiments show that the issue of the 1964 'agreement' remains an emotionally and politically charged issue in contemporary Namibian politics. As a result, it became shrouded in secrecy and near mystery since it was never openly discussed. This state of affairs was exacerbated by the government's decision to ban the United Democratic Party (UDP): 'No UDP meetings will be allowed in the Republic of Namibia from 1 September [2006]. The secessionist activities of the UDP render it an illegal organization.'⁷⁵

In early 2007 Namibians woke to a catchy front page headline in a local daily, 'Secret' Nujoma – Muyongo document surfaces', which read as follows: 'A potentially explosive document related to the Caprivi, which the SWAPO Party has persisted in saying does not exist, has suddenly surfaced in Namibia.'⁷⁶ The impression was created that efforts were

paper, dated 14 October 2006, p. 2 (copy in Caprivi Freedom - History II.htm, p. 3. *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Quoted in Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa', 2003, p. 421.

⁷¹ Press statement made by Sam Nujoma, representing SWAPO and Albert (Mishake) Muyongo, representing CANU, Lusaka, 5 November 1964 (copy in author's possession).

⁷² Afrikaans for Leader or Chief.

⁷³ Benjamin Chika Mabuku, 'Response to Mr. Chrispin Matongo's Secessionist Outbursts', in *New Era*, Friday, 15 September 2006, p. 11.

⁷⁴ www.caprivifreedom.com, p. 3. *Ibid.* It proved difficult to corroborate this claim with any evidence from the parliamentary proceedings.

⁷⁵ Announcement by Namibian Deputy Information Minister Raphael Dinyando at a Media briefing, in *Informanté*, 14 September 2006, p. 10.

⁷⁶ Weidlich, Brigitte, 'Secret Nujoma-Muyongo document surfaces', in *The Namibian*, Wednesday

being made especially on the part of SWAPO to keep such a document secret, or at least deny its existence. The view here is that the said document is a press release, which, by its very nature, makes it a public document. Researchers on Namibian history had known for a long time that the document existed and was held by certain archives and libraries.⁷⁷ Rather SWAPO's contention was that the 'agreement' did not make provision for 'special status' or 'complete autonomy' for Caprivi as claimed by the secessionists. Indeed the document does not mention anything about a separate or independent Caprivi state. Probably this was not 'all' the agreement; it was possible that some 'oral' undertakings were made. Thus according to SWAPO Secretary-General Ngarikutuke Tjiriange, 'There had only been a verbal agreement to merge the two parties ... the CANU members then became SWAPO members, but there was no talk of a separate Caprivi after independence'.⁷⁸ How, realistically, do you enforce such a verbal agreement, let alone make it a basis for a cause such as secession?

It is difficult to dismiss outright that the options proposed by the secessionists were not tabled or even considered during the deliberations that led to the 'merger' between CANU and SWAPO. The negotiations between the two parties on this issue were bound to have been influenced by events in Tanganyika and Zanzibar when on April 24 1964, the United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar was declared renamed Tanzania in October of the same year. The creation of Tanzania did not entail full integration. Zanzibar retained an independent status within Tanzania responsible for local affairs, whilst the Union Government in Dar es Salaam, to which Zanzibar paid an annual contribution, dealt with foreign affairs.⁷⁹ SWAPO was based in Tanganyika during this period and would therefore have been well versed in political developments in the host country.

The CANU-SWAPO agreement followed closely on these developments. On the other hand, negotiations for the 'merger' took place in Lusaka, Zambia, where on the eve of Zambia's independence in 1964, UNIP⁸⁰ successfully negotiated the incorporation of the nominally autonomous Barotseland state into the newly independent Zambian state. Kenneth Kaunda and the Litunga of Buluzi (King of Barotseland), Sir Mwanawina Lewanika, signed the agreement. The impact of this process should not be underestimated. The negotiators

January 24 2007, p. 1.

⁷⁷ The author, for example, had obtained a copy eight years earlier, in 1999, from the University of Cape Town's Manuscripts and Archives Department.

⁷⁸ Dinyando. *op. cit.*

⁷⁹ AAZ: Zanzibar History, at <http://www.allaboutzanzibar.com/indepth/history/id-01-01-timeline.htm>. Accessed on 01 March 2007.

⁸⁰ United Independence Party.

were torn between the Tanganyika (Tanzanian) and the Northern Rhodesian (Zambian) models. As events turned out, the Zambian model prevailed.

In the final analysis the fundamental issue is not whether CANU and SWAPO entered into an agreement, or even what was agreed upon, but what the purpose of the 'merger' agreement was and, most importantly, what implications, if any, did that have on the internationally recognized territorial boundaries of the then South West Africa. It does not appear that the Agreement was intended to merge Caprivi with mainland South West Africa (or perpetuate the separation). Rather the purpose of the Agreement was to 'merge' the two movements into one organization to fight a common enemy, as it turned out, to incorporate CANU into SWAPO. Both parties to the Agreement were not at this stage competent to decide on the international status of the territorial integrity of South West Africa; that remained the preserve of the United Nations Organization (UNO). Even SWAPO was not as yet recognized as the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people. As a letter writer to a local daily pointedly asked: 'Which of the two leaders who signed that Agreement was mandated by the people of the 'two countries', if ever, to conclude and sign such Agreement?'⁸¹

After the 'merger' between CANU and SWAPO, Mishake Muyongo was made SWAPO chief representative in Lusaka. Initially responsible for educational affairs in 1966, he was promoted to the position of Acting Vice-President at the 1969 Tanga Consultative Conference. Two other members, Jackson Mazazi and Lemmy Matengu served on the SWAPO Central Committee. According to Muyongo tension started building up with SWAPO in the mid-to-late 1970s because of the suppressed role of CANU within SWAPO⁸². This led to his expulsion in July 1980. According to Richard Kapelwa, a fellow 'Caprivian', Muyongo and company were expelled because of their intention to form a 'new CANU' with the aim of seceding the Eastern Region from the rest of the country. He continues:

From the availed evidence, it was proved that Muyongo, since his appointment to the position of Acting Vice-President ten years ago, has been fully committed to either overtly or covertly keeping alive a tribal and regional mini-party known as CANU-Caprivi African National Union. By so doing, Muyongo, Mazazi and Matengu have betrayed the Namibian people in their struggle for National Unity.⁸³

⁸¹ Mabuku, Benjamin Chika, 'Response to Mr. Chrispin Matongo's Secessionist Outbursts', in *The Namibian*, Friday, 15 September 2006, p. 11.

⁸² Fosse, 'Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms', 1996, p. 155.

⁸³ Richard Kapelwa, A letter to SWAPO Regional Chairman of the Eastern Region, dated 2 October 1980, in *The Combatant*, vol. II No. 3, pp. 13-15. At the time, Richard Kapelwa was SWAPO Deputy Secretary for Defence and a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee. After independence, he was appointed the first Minister of Works, Transport and Communication, and

The historical discourse is unclear on whether the alliance or 'merger' between CANU and SWAPO collapsed with the departure of Muyongo, even though former CANU members continued fighting for liberation under the banner of SWAPO. The same meeting that expelled Muyongo and others reconfirmed their support and confidence in the SWAPO leadership that still, at least technically, included Brendan Simbwaye. Was SWAPO expelling Muyongo and his group or was it scrapping the 'merger' with CANU?

After the split, Muyongo revived CANU in Lusaka but no leadership was elected apart from him. CANU members condemned this move although attempts to do so were interpreted by Muyongo as subversive. Since then the story of the 'revived' CANU and that of Muyongo has been filled with intrigue and characterized by infighting. Muyongo sidelined two of his top aides, Lemmy Matengu and Chibeya Siseho Simasiku choosing instead to work with Gideon Matengu, Godwin Siyongo and David Mutabelezi.⁸⁴ Muyongo accused the pair of constantly plotting against him. As a result, Likando (1989: 158) writes that on 28 March 1981 Muyongo organized a group of CANU youth whom he paid to discredit the two. This took place apparently after a failed scheme hatched by Muyongo and the South African delegation to abduct the two in Geneva and secretly take them to South Africa. Muyongo's note to the South African delegation was given to a Mr. Reginald Z. Katembo.⁸⁵

In mid October 1982, the Zambian Government invited the CANU leadership in Lusaka to discuss the internal crisis within the organization. Mr. Muyongo left for Botswana on the scheduled date, however before he left, he paid a visit to the Zambian police and alleged that he had narrowly escaped death and that his CANU colleagues Lemmy Matengu and Chibeya Simasiku were behind the assassination plot. The two were detained by the police for questioning and were only released on the instruction of the Prime Minister of Zambia, Nalumino Mundia.⁸⁶ Again, on 5 December 1982, Muyongo had an audience with the Zambian President and repeated allegations of assassination attempts on his life to the media, especially after what he called the 'sacking' of Lemmy Matengu and Chibeya Simasiku from CANU.⁸⁷

A major source of discord between Muyongo and the two seems to be not only the contest for control of CANU but also Muyongo's secret contacts with apartheid South Africa.

held several other Ministerial positions before being sent to Cuba as Ambassador. He passed away in May 2007 and was buried at Heroes Acre in Windhoek.

⁸⁴ Likando describes them as Muyongo's cousins and tribesmen. They were (as was Muyongo) Mafwe speaking.

⁸⁵ Likando, 1989, *The Caprivi Strip: A Historical Perspective*, p. 158.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁸⁷ *Zambian Daily Mail*, 8 July 1983.

The Sunday Times of Zambia of 14 November 1982 reported a secret meeting between Mr. Muyongo and Peter Kalangula of the Christian Democratic Action (CDA), which was also attended by UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi. The same report was carried in the *Windhoek Advertiser* of 20 October 1982. The two men (Lemmy Matengu and Chibeya Simasiku) issued a press release on 25 November 1982⁸⁸ under pressure from the Zambian authorities stating that 'Muyongo's recent participation in the Pretoria sponsored meeting over the formation of a puppet government of national unity was secret and without authority'.⁸⁹ Shortly thereafter, the *Zambian Daily Mail* of 30 June 1983 reported the expulsion of Mishake Muyongo from CANU, who was picked up by the police for questioning. In a headline, 'New Twist to Namibian Saga: Who is who in the South Africa Link', *The Sunday Times of Zambia* of 23 July 1983 reported that Mishake Muyongo confirmed he had had secret meetings with South Africa and revealed all his contacts and activities between 1980 and 1982 during interrogation. The Zambian authorities considering Muyongo to be a security risk deported him to Senegal.⁹⁰

Contrary to Fisch's version that Muyongo was deported to Senegal alone,⁹¹ we now know he was accompanied by Godwin Siyongo, David Mutabelezi and Gideon Matengu.⁹² It is not surprising, therefore, that this group returned to Katima Mulilo through the Ngoma Border Post via South Africa on the 8 July 1985. Mishake Muyongo and his colleagues were kept in detention for four weeks at Katima Mulilo while investigations into their political activities were conducted. After his release he was re-admitted into CANU, but not for long. The Caprivi was at this time submerged in local politics regarding the tribal land dispute between the Mafwe and Masubiya over the existence of an internal boundary between the two groups. After his proposal that CANU be dissolved and that a new party with a new name be formed was soundly defeated, Muyongo left CANU and merged with the Caprivi Alliance Party (CAP) under Patrick Limbo, to form the United Democratic Party (UDP) on the 5 August 1985.

⁸⁸ Likando, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Muyongo's version is that because of imprisonment, he was forced to leave SWAPO and seek refuge in Dakar, Senegal (www.caprivifreedom.com, p. 3, *op.cit.* He is quoted by Fisch (1999: 20) as saying he spent half a year in a prison in Zambia in 1978 and a year in prison in Tanzania after that, as well as a further seven months in a Zambian prison under inhumane conditions. He allegedly spent a short time in what have been called the 'dungeons' – holes dug four metres underground, used as prisons for suspected SWAPO spies. However, even Fisch doubts, according to her sources, that this was the case.

⁹¹ Fisch, *The Secessionist Movement*, 1999, p. 20.

⁹² See www.caprivifreedom.com, p. 4, *op.cit.*

UDP's first congress was held on the 26 August 1985.⁹³ The impression created in some circles that CANU was UDP's predecessor is not correct.⁹⁴ CANU never dissolved or gave way to UDP. Soon after its formation, the UDP joined the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), Muyongo was made Vice-President in 1987 and, with the resignation of Chief Kuai-ma Riruako as DTA President in November 1991, he replaced him. According to Fisch, Muyongo never gave up his idea of a separation of the Caprivi even after his party had joined the DTA. He reportedly put forward the topic of separation for discussion at a DTA congress in Swakopmund in 1987, but it was 'roundly rejected'.⁹⁵ Fisch reasons that Muyongo turned to hoodwinking his colleagues in the DTA, pretending to promote national interests while hoping that if the DTA won the 1989 Constituent Assembly elections, there would be an improved chance to realize his secessionist ambitions.⁹⁶ I would argue that secession, or rather the threat of it, was something that Muyongo kept in reserve as a political tool (something he was not serious about), for use when his political position was threatened. This would explain the fact that, after being expelled from SWAPO and vowing to fight for an independent Caprivi, he aligned himself with political developments in South West Africa.

The answer is partly to be found in what Richard Kapelwa harshly terms 'a serious political weakness' and Muyongo's apparent contradictory tendencies.⁹⁷ He summarizes:

For the last 16 years, Muyongo displayed two contradictory tendencies. On one hand, he was happy to enjoy the prestige and political power which go with the position of the Vice-Presidency of a nationally powerful and internationally renowned movement – SWAPO. On the other hand, he always tended towards tribal or regional cliquism at moments when the revolution demanded a bit more from him, especially with regard to his personal comfort. The idea of moving from Lusaka to Dar-es Salaam in the 1960s and from Lusaka to Luanda recently has been a problem to him. Lusaka was apparently too good for him. Therefore, he has persistently refused to accept and appreciate the necessity for strategic shifts in accordance with the requirements of the struggle at given times...

Was joining the DTA just another quest for personal comfort on the part of Muyongo? In seeking answers to this question, I move onto the question of the involvement of traditional chiefs in politics, which was the support base for Muyongo's political career. By way of explanation, Muyongo almost entirely blames the traditional chiefs. He maintains that while on the one hand his UDP was advocating for an independent Caprivi, on the other, 'Capriv-

⁹³ www.caprivifreedom.com/http://www.caprivifreedom.com.news.i?cmd=view&nid=776, p.4, accessed on 20 November 2006.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Fisch, *The Secessionist Movement*, 1999, p. 22.

⁹⁷ Richard Kapelwa, in *The Combatant*, vol. II No. 3, October 1980, p. 15.

ian' chiefs 'who had been made members of the then council of ministers and later the government of national unity were of the opinion that should the Caprivi become independent they would lose their positions and the new 'Caprivian' government would be run by politicians and not chiefs'.⁹⁸ As a result, Muyongo states, the chiefs chose to remain with Namibia.

The impact of this was that their followers, being traditionally inclined, did not want to disappoint their chiefs. The UDP had no option other than to join the DTA. It follows therefore that the contest was set between Muyongo and the traditional chiefs. Two things should be noted, firstly, that the Caprivi Alliance Party, which Muyongo incorporated into his UDP, was already a member of the DTA, and secondly, that it was under Mafwe Chief Richard Temuso Muhinda Mamili that the CAP joined the DTA. It is not merely coincidental that Chief Richard Temuso Muhinda Mamili was deposed from the chieftaincy at about the same time (1987) apparently for 'neglect of duty'⁹⁹, because he spent most of his time advancing political issues. Though his people deposed him, could it be the rift between him and Muyongo that played itself out in the DTA alliance that cost him his position as a traditional leader?

Maria Fisch has detailed the dynastic heritage of Mishake Muyongo. It is enough to mention here that he was a member of the Mafwe ruling (more specifically Mbalangwe) dynasty, being a direct descendent of Simataa Mamili, the first chief. Even though he was definitely entitled to succession, he waived this on two occasions in favour of a political career. The first of these was in 1971 when, two years before the death of Chief Simasiku, the Mafwe tribal authority dispatched a senior representative to Lusaka to persuade Muyongo to return since the chief's old age was preventing him from executing his duties properly. The second was before Chief Muhinda Mamili was deposed in 1987, when Muyongo announced beforehand that he would waive his candidature, upon which Boniface Bwima, his younger cousin, was installed. Unlike in the case of Chief Muhinda, Muyongo was able to exert strong influence over the young Boniface Bwima, to an extent that it was common knowledge that 'events in the Fwe-area were directed by Muyongo from Windhoek', Fisch pointedly argues.¹⁰⁰ 'Muyongo simply knew how to manipulate Bwima to execute his instructions', Fisch adds.¹⁰¹ Keeping a tight hold on Boniface Bwima Mamili held two advantages for Muyongo. Firstly, in a society where people, especially the majority residing in rural areas, heed the decisions taken by their chiefs, it goes without saying that they change political allegiances when their chiefs do.

⁹⁸ www.caprivifreedom.com.

⁹⁹ Fisch, *The Secessionist Movement*, 1999, p. 44.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

Thus, according to Fosse, patronage and clientilism enter into modern political processes, the public service and other spheres of influence, which essentially are the prerogative of the state.¹⁰² Fosse further states that this allowed politicians from the Caprivi an 'additional power base and channel of influence.' It was essentially Chief Boniface Bwima Mamili's people that were Muyongo's political constituency. 'Mishake Muyongo needs a constituency', was Petlola's analysis on ethnic disputes in the Caprivi.¹⁰³ This political constituency was weakened by the decision by the Mayeyi to breakaway from the Mafwe and assert their independence. The reduced support base saw the DTA lose elections in the Caprivi and move from being the majority party to one with no seats on the regional and local councils. What is even more telling is that, with the departure of Chief Boniface Bwima, the current chief is a declared SWAPO sympathizer, which saw the ruling party win the constituencies under the Mafwe area, previously a DTA stronghold. This is partly why the secessionists accused SWAPO of being behind the move to install a chief for the Mayeyi.

Secondly, by keeping Chief Bwima Mamili on his side, Muyongo ensured that he gained the sympathy of the Lozis in Zambia's Western Province. To serve this cause, Chief Boniface Bwima Mamili undertook several visits to Zambia with such a frequency that Fisch writes that former President Nujoma had to reprimand him.¹⁰⁴ This coincided with the slogan demanding a 'Revival of Lozi Culture in Caprivi' which Mishake Muyongo promoted during the final years of his political career.¹⁰⁵ Chief Boniface Bwima Mamili fled with Muyongo to Botswana once it became public that they had held secret meetings with a South African mercenary hire company (Executive Outcomes) to discuss the Caprivi secession. Muyongo was dismissed as President of the DTA and banned from the party in September 1998. The pair are now granted asylum in Denmark, Their followers are either languishing in prison facing treason charges or living in deplorable conditions in the Dukwe refugee camp in Botswana. Secession, which Muyongo used as bait for political comfort for a long time, now seemed to be the only option available to him could apparently only be achieved through violence.

The secessionists deny the argument that they went to South Africa to negotiate with a mercenary outfit for the secession of Caprivi from Namibia. They maintain that the purpose of their trip to Pretoria was to meet a Mr. Zimmerman who had promised development assistance, especially in the agricultural sector. Underdevelopment of the Caprivi is one of the reasons that, they professed, which led them to choose secession. It is difficult to provide a

¹⁰² Fosse, 'Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms', 1996, p. 153.

¹⁰³ Petlola, in Fosse, *ibid*.

¹⁰⁴ Fisch, *The Secessionist Movement*, 1999, p. 38.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*.

historical context to underdevelopment in the Caprivi without mention of the South African Defence Force (SADF).

During the liberation war Caprivi received a fair share of personnel and equipment, as well as infrastructural development between the 1960s and the 1980s. The withdrawal of the SADF in 1989 resulted in a decline in services that the military had readily provided. As a result, when people from Caprivi begin to question the slow pace of development in the area, this would be contrasted with pre-independence, i.e. the war years. In an area of great agricultural potential, the lack of large-scale agricultural projects is a cause for concern. Government and development agencies point to the instances of tribal tensions as not being conducive to long term investment. The case of the failed Egyptian Development Company (PIDICO) that got entangled in the land dispute between the Mafwe and Masubiya is usually thrown in the face of critics of the lack of development in Caprivi.

Summary

Colonialism, more particularly South African colonialism, created and promoted local notions of identity that served to alienate people in the Caprivi from other ethnic groups in South West Africa. I have argued that it is these localized notions of identity, which are expressed as the desire for secession in the postcolonial era. Because the Caprivi was kept on the periphery of political, social, cultural and economic developments in the rest of South West Africa, local people feel more 'Caprivian' than Namibian. This is not to suggest that secession has a widespread appeal in the Caprivi, in fact its support base is very limited. Regardless of this, however, even a few individuals committed to a cause such as secession are able to destabilize an area as small as the Caprivi.

The chapter examined two issues. These were: the question of whether a historical justification to secession existed and secondly, whether the 1964 CANU-SWAPO 'Agreement' can be seen as a basis for secession. The argument that the Caprivi has historically never been part of Namibia and therefore should be allowed independent status was found to be groundless. Since 1890 the territory formed an integral part of South West Africa, albeit that it was temporarily transferred to first Bechuanaland and later South Africa for administrative purposes. During this time the laws that applied were mainly those of South West Africa.

During the pre-colonial period, the Caprivi was under Lozi and Kololo rule, and therefore not 'independent'. To argue for the return to pre-colonial status would mean the restoration of Lozi rule, which I argued, was not a viable option as it implied a history of subjugation. Lozi identity in the Caprivi is expressed as a form of nostalgia on the part of the Mamili

dynasty, who were direct descendents of Simataa Mamili, the Lozi representative in Caprivi. To regard 'Caprivians', apart from the said group, (now identified as Mbalangwes), as Lozi, is misplaced. The reason secession does not enjoy popular support in the Caprivi is that the other groups living there do not share this Lozi myth of origin.

Secession was ascribed to two factors. Firstly, it is a South African construction reinforcing its interventionist policy of aggression in Southern Africa especially during the 1980s. At the close of its rule, South Africa visualized a friendly, independent Caprivi in a rapidly growing number of independent and hostile southern African countries. The Caprivi would act as a watchtower to monitor developments in the rest of Africa posing a threat to that isolated last bastion of apartheid and white supremacy – South Africa.

Secondly, secession was arguably linked to the political fortunes and misfortunes of its leader, Albert Mishake Muyongo. It was no coincidence that feelings of 'Caprivian-ness' only took on a radical profile when he lost political power. Albert Mishake Muyongo had always kept secession in reserve to use as a political tool whenever he felt threatened politically. He successfully manipulated existing tribal disputes and divisions in the Caprivi particularly those between the Mafwe and Masubiya to aid his checkered political career. Due to his influence as a traditional leader, he was able to make the Mafwe believe they were being marginalized by the Government; a situation that was directed by misinformation from the Masubiya. The majority of those who participated in the secessionist cause were merely expressing anger at the government for alleged acts of discrimination against the Mafwe. Thus, I argued, secession in this context could be understood as an extension of the tribal feuds between the Masubiya and Mafwe.

Muyongo convinced his followers that SWAPO had given an undertaking in 1964 at the time of the 'merger' between CANU and SWAPO that Caprivi would receive independent or special status at Namibian independence. I have argued that neither Muyongo nor Nujoma had the authority to decide on the territorial status of South West Africa at the time, that being the preserve of the United Nations Organization. Therefore even if such an undertaking could have been made, it would be difficult to enforce. It does not, however, appear that an undertaking was made. The so-called merger agreement (actually only a press release), does not clarify the matter. The position taken here is that the purpose of the 'agreement' was to merge CANU and SWAPO, in fact to incorporate two political parties, CANU into SWAPO, and not to incorporate Caprivi into South West Africa nor decide to perpetuate the former's isolation.

The argument that a lack of development in Caprivi accounts for secession was not given serious consideration in this chapter, partly because development history is not my strength, but also because it is a matter of opinion. While proponents of this view point to

the lack of development projects undertaken by the government in Caprivi, development agencies (private sector) and even government point to the instability in the Caprivi caused by tribal divisions as being an inhibiting factor, not conducive to attracting investment. Historically, such claims should be located in the context of the special status Caprivi enjoyed during the liberation war. As a frontline territory it received the lion's share of military equipment, personnel and infrastructure well into the 1980s. With the withdrawal of the SADF this ceased and the inhabitants felt neglected.

10 Conclusion

In conclusion, I have argued that an identity of Caprivian-ness does exist and that sustained contestation characterizes its existence. Identity was defined in the Introduction as a set of feelings, perceptions and actions that colluded with one another over time, a result of both self-ascription (an assertion of who or what we claim to be) and assignment (what others say we are). This Caprivian identity, it was suggested, existed in two forms, i) as a spatial or geographical entity, historically divided into East and West Caprivi for administrative purposes; and, ii) as a people – Subia, Mafwe, Mayeyi, Mbukushu, Barakwena, Totela, Mbalangwe, and Lozi, otherwise collectively known as ‘Caprivians’. I have sought to determine how these Caprivian identities have been constructed in the past, whether this process continues in the present and the way in which it is expressed. I have also examined the issue of whether contestation remains inherent in the expression of the Caprivi identity.

The Introduction interrogated the creation of the Caprivi as a space, the by-product of German and British imperial expansionist and interventionist policy in central southern Africa during the late 1800s. In terms of the Anglo-German Treaty of 1890, Britain ceded a strip of land allowing Germany access to the Zambezi River. Since then the territory that would become the Caprivi Strip has continually been passed onto other powers to exercise control over the territory and its inhabitants. This was, arguably, due to ‘geographical’ and ‘historical’ factors that made the area difficult to administer as part of South West Africa. As a result the Caprivi was administered separately for most of its colonial history, neither fully integrated into South West Africa nor made part of its neighbouring territories. Similarly, though ‘Caprivians’ were depicted as being different from other Namibians in contemporary historiography and ethnographical literature (in that they had closer cultural affinities to their kin in Zambia and Botswana than to fellow Namibians), they were not fully integrated as such either. It was this sense of being ‘different’ and ‘not belonging’ that produced what has been described as a feeling of Caprivianess. ‘Caprivians’ have been, and remain, Namibia’s ‘other’.

The focus in chapter two was on pre-colonial Caprivi identities. The first question raised in this regard was whether there was any form of social and political organization in pre-Caprivi times, especially before the advent of Lozi and Kololo rule? It was argued that indeed local identities such as Subiya, Yeyi, Fwe, Mbukushu and Totela existed in a pre-Caprivi period, even before the arrival of the Lozi, but that their social and political forms of organization were not centrally organized, rendering them vulnerable to outside influence.

It was shown that local chiefdoms such as the Subiya kingdom of Itenge, often a subject of dismissive historiographical discussions, existed before the advent of Lozi rule.

The second issue discussed in chapter two was the nature of societal relations in pre-colonial times in the geographical space that is now Caprivi. These took the form of a contest for the control of both space and people, involving outside powers such as the Aluyi (Lozi), the Makololo of Sebetwane, the Batawana, and the Matebele (Ndebele) of Mzilikazi. Pre-colonial Caprivi offered protection, grazing pastures and winter gardens that attracted the above groups. Because of the competition for such resources, societal relations in pre-colonial Caprivi revolved around conquest and resistance, plunder, betrayal and rivalry. In this regard, two important conclusions were reached: the inhabitants of pre-colonial Caprivi did not passively submit to the suffering and disdain inflicted by the Lozi and Kololo, but attempted to regain their independence at various points. Thus to depict them as 'serfs' neglects a basic fact, namely that resistance is part and parcel of subjectivity in state formation and the Lozi and Kololo pre-colonial conquest states are no exception.

The second conclusion proposes that the Lozi and Kololo rule and subjugation of the pre-colonial Caprivi should be classified as foreign and colonial in nature. Colonial historiography and ethnographic literature tends to disregard the history of exploitation during the pre-colonial period and reconstitute it as the history of the territory. In the process local histories are replaced by Lozi or Kololo history. Locals have no history in this scheme other than being slaves during Lozi and Kololo rule.

The third question addressed in chapter two was what role, if any, pre-colonial identities played in shaping a later 'Caprivian' identity. While much can be said about continuities in Caprivi identity from the pre-colonial era, especially perceptions of space and people, two issues stand out: i) strategic importance and ii) contestation. Strategically, pre-colonial Caprivi offered refuge and plenty of game, fruit and fish to its inhabitants all of which attracted external forces, especially the Lozi and Kololo. As a result territorial battles for control ensued between Lozi and the locals, Lozi and Kololo, and Kololo and the locals. These wars resulted in displacement since the locals simply moved away from danger even crossing rivers to do so. While identities scattered in this way, territorially the space that would become the Caprivi, home to Caprivi identity, was shrunk to a panhandle. The wresting of control away from the locals began during the pre-colonial era, continued during the colonial period, and was even greater after independence with the delimitation of regions. Due to its strategic location, spatial Caprivi identity was a contested terrain from pre-colonial times. This was based on difference. 'Caprivians' are different from the rest of Namibians, fundamentally because they are perceived as Lozi, which is a pre-colonial or pre-Caprivi identity. But this identity, it was argued, was not unchanging, we cannot ignore factors such as the fusion of

'Caprivians' with other Namibians that began before independence and continued at the time of the liberation war in SWAPO camps and of course included social interaction before and after independence involving inter or cross-cultural marriages.

A major assertion in this book is that these Caprivi identities were formed largely through state formation. To support this analysis, chapter three focused on the evolution of a colonial administrative identity in Caprivi, particularly the eastern part, the territory that lies east of the Mashi/Kwando/Chobe River variously known over time as the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* (ECZ) or Eastern Caprivi Strip. The history of colonial administration in Caprivi can be divided into six phases.

Phase one began with the creation of Caprivi in 1890 through the Anglo-German Treaty of 1 July and concluded in 1909. During this period there was no official German administrative presence in Caprivi apart from the occasional fact-finding mission. The consensus seems to be that Germany lost interest in the Caprivi during this time after it became apparent that the Zambezi was not navigable all the way to east Africa, due to many rapids. Germany did, however, administer Caprivi as a sphere of influence, an area reserved for future action. Spheres of influence did not, by their very nature, vest territorial rights in the occupier and needed enabling treaties to protect and prevent other powers from claiming rights in such a territory. Even then only powers that were signatories to the treaty were bound to respect such a sphere of influence.

The second phase began in 1909 when Kurt Streitwolf was sent to establish administrative control in the eastern part of the Caprivi and ended in 1914 when the Allied Forces ended the German occupation of the Caprivi during the First World War. Apart from the installation of two tribal chiefs in a primitive form of indirect rule, the German period in the Caprivi was uneventful.

The third phase began in 1914 and ended in 1922 during which time, like the rest of South West Africa, the Caprivi was under military rule. A police contingent stationed at Schuckmannsburg reported to a resident commissioner at Kasane in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The period 1922 to 1929 constitutes phase four during which time the Caprivi was formally handed over to the resident commissioner of Bechuanaland stationed at Kasane to exercise administrative control even though it still formed part of South West Africa. The western part of the Caprivi was administered from Maun, also in Bechuanaland. This position changed at the behest of the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations that complained that this was tantamount to a violation of the Mandate agreement.

The rectification of that anomaly ushered in the fifth phase (1929 – 1939) of the colonial administrative history of the Caprivi, and saw the territory incorporated back into South

West Africa. A member of the South West Africa Police was stationed at Schuckmannsburg to exercise administrative control in conjunction with the two chiefs appointed in 1909. Administration at this time took the form of an annual police patrol throughout the territory and irregular inspection tours from officials at head office. In August 1939 the Union Department of Native Affairs assumed direct administrative control of the Eastern Caprivi Strip. This lasted until 1980 when the territory reverted back to the South West Africa Administration under the Second Tier system of government until the implementation of the United Nations Resolution 435.

The period 1939 to 1980 thus constitutes phase six of Caprivi colonial administrative identity and can be subdivided into two periods, 1939-1964 (the period of the Bantu reserve) and 1964 to 1980 (the Bantustan period).

Administrative neglect ensured that a sense of isolation and not belonging developed in the Caprivi. This neglect began when Germany administered it as a sphere of influence for almost twenty years. Even when an administration was established in 1909, rule over the territory remained benign, an approach adopted by successive colonial administrations. This neglect, for the most part, was justified on the basis that geographical and historical factors rendered it difficult to administer the territory as part of South West Africa. The territory was perceived to be swampy, feverish (malarial) and populated by wandering 'bushmen' and thus was not thought suitable for white settlement. Consequently, the Caprivi was pushed towards neighbouring territories administratively, rather than being seen as part of South West Africa. At the same time it was not made an integral component either of Bechuanaland or Barotseland. In other words, the inhabitants were administered in a way that made them feel as though they belonged more to Barotseland and Bechuanaland than to South West Africa. A Caprivian identity emerged based on the perception that the territory was unhealthy, remote and separate.

A central question addressed in chapter three was how the colonial administrative identity helped shape a Caprivi identity. What role did state formation play in the construction of a Caprivian identity? As the Caprivi changed rulers six times in its colonial history, its inhabitants were not made to feel that they were part of anything. What changed was the nationality of the colonial officials, but little imprint was left on the lives of the people. Neither German nor Afrikaans, in the case of the South African administration, is spoken in the Caprivi. Apart from one small brick hut left at Schuckmannsburg, there is no prominent colonial architecture in the Caprivi. Colonial history is remembered largely in an intangible form.

A second aspect is the provision of services such as health and education. Until 1964 these were left in the hands of missionaries of the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church and later the Catholic Capuchin Order. These churches had their headquarters in North-

ern and Southern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland. In matters of education, the curricula and examinations that were written in the Caprivi before 1964 were those of the Northern Rhodesian Education Department. Officials who inspected schools in the Caprivi during this period were from Northern Rhodesia. It is not surprising that many of the inhabitants of the Caprivi became migrant labourers in those countries. Confusion reigned. On the map and according to international law, the Caprivi formed part of South West Africa but administratively it relied and depended on the goodwill of neighbouring territories. 'Caprivians' were orientated educationally away from South West Africa. The post office that was used was that of Sesheke in Northern Rhodesia, and even the official currency used in the Caprivi was that of Northern Rhodesia.

A third aspect is the Odendaal Commission's recommendations for the implementation of a Bantustan called East Caprivi. Implementation began in 1972 with the establishment of a Legislative Council, which eventually attained self-government in 1976. This in a sense marked the fulfilment of Caprivi identity in that it gave the inhabitants a flag, anthem and coat of arms, all symbols of 'statehood'. What is more, the term 'Caprivian' or East 'Caprivians' was coined and thus people were made to feel 'Caprivian' rather than 'South West African' during this period. This aided in the formation of a distinct Caprivi identity. The period from 1964 onwards saw a shift with increased South African interest in the region, especially in regard to the military sphere, but with the tendency for the development of stronger links with Pretoria than with South West Africa. In terms of state formation, it was concluded that the Caprivi was central within a southern Africa perspective but peripheral from the viewpoint of Namibian state formation.

Chapter four argued that there was a frontier aspect to the Caprivi identities, and that this frontier was contested. As early as the pre-colonial period, ideas of a frontier of plenty (game, fish, fruit, and grazing pastures) as well as danger (Makololo and Matebele invasions) surfaced. To this should be added the idea of the Caprivi as a frontier of refuge especially for European vagabonds and poachers between 1890 and 1909. The Caprivi became a frontier of migrant labour extraction and a military frontier during the colonial period. Labour hire organizations such as the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA), the South West Africa Native Labour Association (SWANLA) and the Northern Labour Organization (NLO) vied with each other to establish labour recruitment camps in the Caprivi, both west and east. The Southern Rhodesian Government was granted permission to establish a transit camp for migrant labour recruitment in the Caprivi, even though this was vehemently opposed by the Gold Producers Commission in Johannesburg. Hence the Caprivi became a contested frontier for migrant labour extraction during this period. It was established that the focus for migrant labour organizations was not Caprivi but Angola, one of the most

heavily populated parts of southern Africa at the time. A recruitment camp in Caprivi gave an organization easy reach and access to the eastern Angola market. When the labour hire dispute between WNLA and SWANLA asserted itself, it was resolved that WNLA should not recruit in other parts of SWA, which should be reserved for SWANLA, while WNLA retained the Caprivi. This did not prevent migrant workers especially from the former Owambo-land walking on foot for long distances to western Caprivi and parading as Angolans in order to be allowed to go to the Rand mines. Even with its small population, East Caprivi still managed to send an average of 30 migrant workers per month to the Rand mines. All these factors reinforced Caprivi identities in a variety of ways. Migrant labour involved not only going away but also returning home as part of the contract. Migrant workers always knew that they had to come back to the Caprivi after the completion of their tour of duty, to come back 'home' where they belonged. That home was the Caprivi. This involved deferred remuneration, which brought in income to sustain the growth of a Caprivi identity. The routes of migrant work pointed away from South West Africa to Northern and Southern Rhodesia, but mainly to the Rand mines. Migrant labourers came back speaking a variety of dialects they had learnt in the mine compounds. Had the routes of migrant labour pointed to South West Africa, 'Caprivians' would have been more integrated into Namibian state formation, like many from northern Namibia who even chose to 'break contract' and not return to the 'Homelands' of Owambo and Kavango. Thus migrant work was a lost opportunity to integrate Caprivi into mainstream South West Africa. Instead migrancy was directed to countries where 'Caprivians' remained foreigners.

The military frontier aspect of Caprivi identity became more pronounced during the mid-1960s with the escalation of the armed liberation struggle in southern Africa. During this period the Caprivi became a dangerous war frontier. Young South African conscripts were sent to this border area to fight a war as part of their compulsory military service. For South Africa the Caprivi represented the last stand against communism, a frontier for the protection of white western values in the Cold War or East-West confrontation. Because it served as the SADF's first line of defence against the advance of Black Africa and launching pad for the destabilization of the Frontline states, the Caprivi became one of the most heavily militarized places in Africa. For SWAPO's PLAN combatants, the Caprivi became a corridor to freedom, a transit point to Windhoek. While on the one hand, the war was about the consolidation of the Caprivi identity as part of South Africa, (this was the time of the implementation of the Odendaal recommendations), on the other the war symbolized a deconstruction of Caprivi identities. As discussed below, a sizable number of 'Caprivians' joined SWAPO through CANU and fought as PLAN combatants, in a sense desiring to shed their identity as a Caprivian in order to bring about an independent Namibia.

While on a macro level a spatial Caprivi existed, at the local or micro level the Caprivi identities were fragmented for most of the colonial period. State formation in the Eastern Caprivi recognized only two identities, the Mafwe and Masubiya. This involved a loss of identity for other groups such as the Mayeyi, Mbukushu, Barakwengo (San), and Matotela. The latter were forced to identify themselves as Mafwe in a single ethnic alliance. The state apparatus, however, did not delineate the spheres of influence of the two identities that were created, and hence many scholars argue that it is because of this that endless tribal feuds are prevalent in the Caprivi. It was argued above, however, that the cause of tribal conflict in the Caprivi has much to do with the basis on which a Caprivi identity was premised – a heritage of social upheaval and conflict based on foreignness. While the two identities were created, they are taken to have no historical basis except that which the Lozi bequeathed to them. It was pointed out how a Lozi representative in the Caprivi was appointed as chief of the Mafwe ethnic coalition and how a commoner was appointed regent chief over the Masubiya. This created further problems for the inhabitants of the Caprivi implying that they remained foreigners in their own territory. They wanted to be perceived as indigenous.

In this way tribal conflicts in the Caprivi reflected a concern for indigenosity that resulted in contested identities and rival histories claiming to show who came first in the area. The competition for indigenosity between the Masubiya and Mafwe resulted in a competition for resources, especially land utilization. The colonial state resolved this by arguing that neither had ancestral claim to the Caprivi since it was the land of the Lozi.

After independence, a further fragmentation of the Caprivi identity in terms of identity assertion was witnessed with the breakaway of the Mashi and the Mayeyi from the Mafwe ethnic alliance. As the Mashi Traditional Authority claims to be the 'true Mafwe', a further split of identities may be in the offing. This shows that Caprivi identity was and continues to be contested at the local level. This is reflected in disputes over historical claims to indigenosity.

Africans responded in different ways to the colonial creation of the Caprivi. The most organized response before independence was the rise of regional nationalism. The formation of CANU expressed a desire for freedom or self-rule, but not in the form of Caprivi identity or Bantustanism. The nationalists vowed to get rid of the white man's rule and CANU was a vehicle to achieve that objective. At this stage, the notion of nationalism was limited to events in Caprivi, and thus it was argued that CANU was a response to Caprivi identity and its isolation. The fact that the CANU nationalists constantly interacted with nationalists from Northern Rhodesia's UNIP is indicative of its desire to break this isolation. It can be concluded that the movement threatened a Caprivi identity.

One such threat to a Caprivi identity was realized in 1964 when the state harshly responded to the formation of CANU by clamping down on its rank and file causing many to cross the border into what was then Northern Rhodesia. While in Zambia, CANU joined forces with SWAPO to embark on a joint assault on apartheid South Africa, thereby realizing that their identity was broader than simply Caprivian and that they were part of a larger entity that was South West Africa. This fundamental realization and merger ensured that the interaction among those who went into exile outlived the discrimination of being 'Caprivians'; they sacrificed to free the whole of South West Africa, not only Caprivi. This interaction took place in SWAPO camps where they lived as refugees together with other South West Africans thereby dispelling the myth of being different. All the same, because of its harsh response to CANU's threat to a Caprivi identity, the colonial state banished Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye, its founder president, to other parts of South West Africa. This served to put him in touch with nationalists in South West Africa such as Clemens Kapuuo, who arranged for Advocate Israel Goldblatt to secure his release. Thus by banning Simbwaye from the Caprivi, the state indirectly aided the deconstruction of a Caprivi identity as taking him to South West Africa affirmed the fact that Caprivi was part of South West Africa. Brendan Simbwaye is still unaccounted for and presumed dead. No one can say with any certainty what happened to him or where he might be buried. There are strong indications that his body was thrown into the Zambezi River.

At present certain Caprivians still call for secession from Namibia. In 1999 a group calling itself the Caprivi Liberation Army (CLA) attacked government installations around Katima Mulilo which led to the deaths of several persons. A number of people fled the Caprivi into Botswana, where some still remain as refugees at Dukwe. The leaders of the secessionists, Mishake Albert Muyongo, who led CANU into SWAPO but was expelled in 1980, and former Mafwe chief, Boniface Bebi Mamili, were offered political asylum in Denmark. More than one hundred men are being tried for treason, sedition and illegal possession of arms in Namibian courts in the biggest and longest running court case since independence. At the core of secession is the argument that SWAPO entered into an agreement with CANU in 1964 that at independence Caprivi would be allowed to decide whether to join Namibia or be independent; an agreement SWAPO seems to have forgotten.

Does the present construction of Caprivi identity (secession) have a historical basis? Since 1890 the Caprivi has been part and parcel of South West Africa, even when it passed among different colonial masters. Such transfer was only for administrative purposes and had no bearing on the borders of Namibia. Whether CANU and SWAPO entered into an agreement was of no consequence since neither of the two movements was authorised to take such a decision. South West Africa, including the Caprivi was under the United Nations

and thus no decision affecting the territorial integrity of the territory could be taken by anyone other than the UN, or without consulting the UN.

Was the secessionist movement a direct result of the construction of a Caprivi identity? Apartheid South African's machinations, especially in the 1980s, helped persuade the now leader of the secessionists to lead an independent Caprivi and hence guarantee its influence in a southern Africa that had grown increasingly intolerant and opposed to apartheid policy. This was designed as part of a Caprivi identity that ensured that inhabitants identified themselves primarily as 'Caprivians'. So the secessionist movement in the Caprivi was a direct result of the South African colonialism, which created and emphasized local notions of identity that served to alienate local people in the Caprivi from other ethnic groups in South West Africa by deliberately keeping the Caprivi on the periphery of political, social, cultural and economic development. As a result, local people were inclined to feel more 'Caprivian' than Namibian. This is not to suggest that secession has a wide appeal in the Caprivi, in fact its support base is very limited and continues to dwindle. However, the contest for a Caprivi identity, ongoing from pre-colonial times, continues in independent Namibia

List of Figures

<i>Figure 1:</i> An early photograph of people in western Caprivi, 1909, taken during the Streitwolf expedition. NAN Photo Collection, 6621 (courtesy of the Militärarchiv Freiburg i.B.)	4
<i>Figure 2:</i> Namibian President Sam Nujoma and Botswana President Quett Masire meet in Caprivi in 1992 for talks about the Kasikili Island conflict. NAN, Photo Collection, 13977: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting	60
<i>Figure 3:</i> ‘Tjivonas people (Mafue)’ as seen by the German colonial officer Streitwolf in 1909. NAN Photo Collection, 6622 (courtesy of the Militärarchiv Freiburg i.B.)	69
<i>Figure 4:</i> The arrival of colonial representatives and modern means of transportation. NAN, Photo Collection, 2178	75
<i>Figure 5:</i> A school inspector travelling by canoe in eastern Caprivi, 1960s. NAN, Photo Collection, 5463	105
<i>Figure 6:</i> A child with Goitre. Photographer: G. J. Botha. NAN, Photo Collection, 26589	106
<i>Figure 7:</i> ‘Traditional dancers from Caprivi’, 1970s or 1980s. Photographer: G.J. Botha. NAN, Photo Collection, 26572	125
<i>Figure 8:</i> South African military helicopter surveillance of Caprivi. NAN, Photo Collection, 12990 (courtesy IDAF/Mayibuye Collection)	146
<i>Figure 9:</i> Bomb crater near Katima Mulilo. Published in the Windhoek Advertiser 1 December 1977. NAN, Photo Collection, 13316 (courtesy IDAF/Mayibuye Collection)	151
<i>Figure 10:</i> A PLAN soldier photographed in Rundu, Kavango, in 1987 by John Liebenberg. NAN, Photo Collection, 12250 (courtesy John Liebenberg)	155
<i>Figure 11:</i> ‘Underground munitions store at a South African army camp in Caprivi Strip’. NAN, Photo Collection, 13575 (courtesy IDAF/Mayibuye Collection)	156
<i>Figure 12:</i> Daily life during the war. NAN, Photo Collection, 12475	159
<i>Figure 13:</i> Daily life in the Lyambezi area. NAN, Photo Collection, 11314	178
<i>Figure 14:</i> Flag of East-Caprivi, 1976	183
<i>Figure 15:</i> Mawfe Chief Richard Temuso Muhinda Mamili. Photographer: G.J. Botha. NAN, Photo Collection, 26736	184
<i>Figure 16:</i> A Canu membership card, adapted from Kruger, NAN, A. 472	204

Figure 17: Portrait of Brendan Simbwaye: an extract from the Poster ‘The 26th of August’, issued by SWAPO, Dar-es-Salaam, c. 1969. BAB, Poster Collection, X 2786 218

Figure 18: Remains of Mayala village after the Singalamwe massacre in 1968. Freproduced from Namibia Today, Vol 7, No 6/7, June/July 1974, p. 3 229

List of Maps

Map 1: Namibia and its regions. Adapted from G. Hopwood: ‘Guide to Namibian Politics’, 2008 edition, Windhoek, p. 4 X

Map 2: The extent of Iteenge, adapted from Fosse (1996), after Shamukuni (1972) 34

Map 3: ‘The settlement of the Massubia’, 1912. NAN, Map Collection, 2556 46

Map 4: Sketch map hand-drawn by the Native Commissioner A.B. Colenbrander on 8 November 1954 136

Map 5: Medical Services in 1963. Reproduced from the so-called Odendaal Report: ‘Report of the Commission of Enquiry into South West Africa Affairs 1962-1963’,. Republic of South Africa, R.P. No 12/1964, p. 202f. 143

Map 6: Modern Caprivi. Adapted from John Mendelsohn, Alice Jarvis, Carole Roberts and Tony Roberson: Atlas of Namibia. Published for the Ministry of Environment and Tourism by Sunbird Publishers, 2009 (3rd edition) 175

List of Tables

<i>Table 1:</i> Census Figures for 1930 and 1939	6
<i>Table 2:</i> Table showing distribution of households by language spoken in Caprivi, 2001 Namibia Population Census	8
<i>Table 3:</i> Informal census showing composition of the Mafwe tribal area in 1976.	42
<i>Table 4:</i> Diagram showing number of firearms owned by tribesmen in Eastern Caprivi in 1931	82
<i>Table 5:</i> Diagram showing the Caprivi public service employees in 1937	87
<i>Table 6:</i> Diagram showing the number of those classified as ‘alien learners’ in Caprivi schools	107
<i>Table 7:</i> Diagram showing number and nationalities of those classified as ‘alien natives’ employed in Caprivi	107
<i>Table 8:</i> Diagram showing Administrative Expenditure in Caprivi from 1929 to early 1960s	116
<i>Table 9:</i> Native Commissioners who served in Eastern Caprivi during the South African period	123
<i>Table 10:</i> Diagram showing PLAN battle encounters	153
<i>Table 11:</i> Table showing the August 1981 Katima Mulilo Census figures	176

Abbreviations

AACRLS	Archives of the Anti-Colonial Resistance and the Liberation Struggle
AG	Administrator-General
ANC	African National Congress
ASA	African Studies Association
BAB	Basler Afrika Bibliographien
BIC	Bantu Investment Corporation
BNA	Botswana National Archives
BPG	Bantu Police Guard
BSAC	British South Africa Company
BSAP	British South Africa Police
CANU	Caprivi African National Union
CAP	Caprivi Alliance Party
CLA	Caprivi Liberation Army
DTA	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
ECZ	Eastern Caprivi <i>Zipfel</i>
FNLA	Front for the National Liberation of Angola
GSWA	German South West Africa
GVO	Government Veterinary Officer
MPLA	Movement for the Popular Liberation of Angola
NAN	National Archives of Namibia
NAP	Pretoria National Archives
NAZ	National Archives of Zambia
NEPRU	Namibia Economic Policy Research Unit
NLO	Northern Labour Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PLAN	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
SAAF	South African Air Force
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SADF	South African Defence Force
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
SSRHMP	SADC Secretariat Research Hashim Mbita Project
SWA	South West Africa

SWAA	South West Africa Administration
SWALA	South West Africa Liberation Army
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organization
SWATF	South West Africa Territorial Force
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDP	United Democratic Party
UN	United Nations
UNAM	University of Namibia
UNIP	United Independence Party
WHAM	Winning Hearts and Minds
WNLA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association

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Index

A

Adams, Major Goold 34, 57
Africa Liberation Committee 113
African National Congress (ANC) 155, 244
African Studies Association (ASA) 18
Ahtisaari, Marti 157
Akufuna 40
Akweenda, Sackey 57, 58, 59, 60, 62, 63, 239, 240
Alexandretta 95
Andara 41, 56, 72, 77, 79, 137, 138
Anderson, Benedict 15, 227
Angola 3, 32, 52, 53, 54, 56, 59, 63, 64, 80, 107, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 144, 145, 147, 149, 154, 155, 156, 159, 161, 163, 199, 222, 228, 232, 244, 245, 246, 267
Archives of Anti-Colonial Resistance and Liberation Struggle Project (AACRLS) 17
Argus Group 229
Arnot 133
Ashwin, Jack 142, 196
Asia 15

B

Badenhorst, N.J. (Nic) 123, 223
Bagani (see also Buffalo) 154, 156
Balme, Frank 135
Bantu Affairs Department 221
Bantu Community School 118, 120, 208
Bantu Investment Corporation (BIC) 54, 118
Bantu Police Guards (BPG) 227
Baragwanath 147
Barotseland XI, 5, 7, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 37, 38, 40, 42, 51, 56, 58, 59, 61, 66, 67, 68, 74, 78, 86, 155, 127, 130, 139, 155, 157, 170, 171, 191, 192, 195, 211, 212, 234, 245, 253, 266
Barotse Patriotic Front (BPF) 241
Barrell, V.P. 147
Basler Afrika Bibliographien XIII, 1, 19
Bassingthwaite, E.M. 147
Basutoland (see also Lesotho) 52, 247
Batawana Reserve 68, 135
Battalion 33 159

Battalion 101 246
 Battalion 201 159
 Battalion 701 159
 Batubadja 70
 Bebi, Benjamin (see also Mamili, Benjamin) 229
 Bechuanaland Protectorate Veterinary Service 86
 Bechuanaland (see also Botswana) XII, 3, 5, 48, 49, 51, 52, 54, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 64, 65,
 66, 68, 69, 72, 73, 74, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 86, 87, 89, 99, 100, 103,
 104, 106, 107, 109, 110, 111, 122, 126, 127, 128, 131, 132, 135, 137, 139, 142,
 143, 146, 171, 188, 191, 192, 194, 195, 211, 239, 260, 265, 266, 267
 Bella, Ben 199
 Berlin 58, 173
 Bertrand, Captain 133, 134
 Bezuidenhout 216, 227
 Blake, Robert da Costa 53
 Blignaut 81
 Bloemfontein 183
 Bogatsu, Mamili 42, 43
 Boshoff, N.W.D. 123, 200
 Bosman, Constable 148, 210
 Bosman, Sakkie 148, 215
 Botha, M.C. 114, 122, 245
 Botletle river 39
 Botswana (see also Bechuanaland) 1, 3, 9, 19, 44, 20, 24, 29, 33, 35, 39, 41, 45, 59, 145,
 158, 160, 129, 131, 138, 147, 148, 160, 162, 167, 170, 171, 237, 239, 243, 244,
 255, 259, 263, 270
 Bredell, Anton 243
 Breytenbach, Jan 154, 156, 160, 161
 British Colonial Office 57
 British South Africa Company (BSAC) 56, 200
 British South African Police (BSAP) 71, 200
 Brittz, E.P. (Namatama) 51, 52, 79, 81, 83, 84, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 101, 102, 147,
 173, 190, 191
 Brown, Susan 151, 152
 Budack, Kuno 25, 31, 169, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 183, 186
 Buffalo (see also Bagani) 154, 161
 Bukalo 30, 154, 158, 174, 175, 177, 182, 188, 204, 213
 Bulawayo 71, 134, 141, 142, 162, 200
 Bulozzi 23, 28, 31, 32, 35, 36, 40, 42, 131, 240, 253
 Bureau for State Security (BOSS) 155
 Burton Marshall, Charles 114
 Butoka 29

Bwabwata 3, 77, 135
Bwima, Boniface 258, 259, 270

C

Cairo 58
Caltex 151
Cambodia 144
Cape Colony 1, 15, 21, 28, 47, 53, 58, 72, 92, 145, 147, 148, 162, 163, 229, 253
Capel, Major 71
Cape Town 1, 21, 28, 53, 72, 92, 148, 149, 229, 253
Caplan 21, 124, 202, 226, 233
Caprivi African National Union (CANU) XII, 13, 17, 19, 20, 149, 182, 119, 120, 151, 168, 182, 183, 190, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 218, 226, 227, 230, 231, 233, 234, 235, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 260, 261, 268, 269, 270
Caprivi Alliance Party (CAP) 124, 184, 234, 256, 258
Caprivi Legislative Assembly 112, 122, 182, 188, 224
Caprivi Legislative Council 122, 182, 224
Caprivi, Leo Graf von XI, 3, 64
Caprivi Liberation Army (CLA) 237, 270
Capuchin Order (see also Catholic Church) 12, 104, 266
Castro (see also Shuuya) 151
Catholic Church (see also Capuchin Order) 12, 13, 52, 104, 106, 114, 157, 159, 176, 196, 208, 222, 247, 266
Celsa, Sister 196
Chadwick, W.S. 81, 146
Chaka, K.L. 150
Chaka, Songeya (Songiya) Longone 81, 87, 150, 209, 215
Chalmers 51
Chapman, James 49
Chatham House 16
Cheete 28, 29
Chetto 154, 160
Chika, Chief (see also Liswani) 39, 64, 68, 110, 171, 242, 252, 254
Chikamatondo, Chief 39, 44, 68, 70, 75, 84, 96, 101, 130, 165, 171, 173, 190, 195
Chiluba, Fredrick 241
Chinchimane 242
Chipman, H. 52
Chobe National Park 3
Chobe River 3, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 59, 64, 110, 139, 154, 174, 265
Choi 182, 242
Chotto 120
Christian Democratic Action (CDA) 256

Chunga, Induna 209, 210
 Chungwe Namutitima (see also Victoria Falls) 33, 49
 Chunie' Spoort 54
 Colenbrander, A.B. 47, 108, 123, 148, 136
 Colliard 133
 Commonwealth 95
 Constituent Assembly 252, 257
 Council of Traditional Leaders 186, 187
 Crewe, Lord 57
 Curron, Father 196
 Curson, H.H. 98, 146

D

Dairy 121, 176
 Damara Council 223
 Damaraland 223, 224
 Dar es Salaam 149, 151, 163, 230, 232, 218, 249, 251, 253
 De Bruin, H.F.J. 223
 Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) 112, 124, 184, 234, 237, 242, 252, 257, 258, 259
 Denmark 24, 259, 270
 Department of Bantu Affairs 209, 219
 Department of Native Affairs 6, 12, 72, 90, 92, 95, 98, 147, 111, 122, 135, 148, 192, 193, 200, 214, 266
 De Wet Nel, Michael Daniel Christian 218
 Dibebe I 41
 Diergaardt, Hans 252
 Dimbo I 41
 Dithakong 35
 Dukwe 259, 270
 Du Preez, Major 88, 191
 Dutch Reformed Church 222

E

Eagle Maize 176
 Eason, Captain H.V. 64, 73, 74
 Eastern Caprivi 6, 11, 18, 21, 25, 27, 29, 30, 36, 40, 41, 42, 47, 48, 51, 52, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, 84, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 98, 99, 101, 102, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 117, 120, 122, 123, 124, 125, 127, 164, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 150, 152, 159, 161, 163, 164, , 190, 167, 168, 175, 176, 187, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 219, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 203, 204, 211, 218, 219, 224, 226, 233, 238, 239, 245, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269
 East London 61, 78, 81, 148

Eastwood, H. 141
 Edminson, E.S. 147
 Egidy, Heidi von 21, 124, 202, 226, 233
 Egyptian Development Company (see also PIDICO) 179, 260
 England (see also Great Britain) 49
 Epstein, A.L. 166
 Erasmus, F.C. 148
 Escher, Alfred 225
 Etango 161
 Ethiopia 111, 113, 114, 245
 Executive Outsomes 259
 Ezuva 161

F

Fanon, Franz 9
 Fardon, Richard 186
 Finaughty 54, 117, 196, 207, 228, 229
 Finaughty, Douglas & Pauline 54
 Finaughty, William (Bill) 54
 Finland 18
 First National Development Corporation 176
 Fischer, Sergeant 72, 134
 Fisch, Maria 43, 21, 22, 30, 44, 45, 47, 58, 61, 62, 65, 66, 68, 70, 131, 132, 135, 167, 172, 238, 240, 244, 247, 250, 251, 256, 257, 258, 259
 Flint, Lawrence 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 38, 39, 40, 43, 62, 64, 67, 170, 171, 244, 245, 250, 252
 Folosi, Induna Kamwi 101
 Forsyth, Ian 137, 145
 Fort Doppies 154, 155, 160
 Fosse, Leif John 7, 21, 34, 175, 146, 148, 176, 186, 202, 226, 231, 233, 238, 239, 241, 242, 243, 250, 251, 254, 259
 Fouche, Paul 123
 France 95
 Francistown 136, 138, 142
 Frankenberg und Proschlitz, Viktor von (Sankonko) 71, 72, 134, 174
 Fraser, General 114
 Frente Nacional da Libertação de Angola (FNLA) 246

G

Garbutt, Captain F. 74
 Geldenhuys, Gleeson 158
 Gemmill, William 137, 138, 139, 141
 George, Father 157, 193, 195, 196, 201, 202, 225, 247, 251

Germany XI, 3, 5, 12, 43, 19, 21, 22, 27, 39, 41, 44, 45, 47, 48, 51, 52, 55, 56, 57, 58, 61, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72, 73, 77, 79, 80, 85, 87, 95, 96, 98, 126, 131, 134, 145, 147, 148, 161, 163, 165, 168, 172, 173, 174, 188, 192, 193, 194, 239, 240, 244, 263, 265, 266

Ghana 197, 199

Ghanzi 138

Gibbons 29, 47, 133

Gobabis 64, 89, 138

Gobler, P. 150

Goha Hills 29, 33, 41

Goldblatt, Israel 1, 18, 19, 215, 216, 218, 220, 221, 222, 223, 270

Gomare 39

Gorges, Sir E.H.L. 72

Great Britain (see also England) XII, 3, 12, 13, 28, 29, 47, 49, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 68, 70, 72, 73, 95, 99, 100, 111, 126, 128, 131, 146, 153, 154, 155, 161, 163, 194, 200, 239, 246, 263

Greogry, E.L. 123

Grootfontein 79, 135, 138, 159, 184, 217

H

Hainyeko, Tobias 150, 151, 227

Halt Farm 223

Hamilton 133

Hankuze 41

Hanney, Lieutenant 64

Hansmeyer, P.N. 123, 147, 177

Harding 133

Harrington 76

Harris, Kennedy 141

Harris, Tommy 53

Hartmann, Sergeant 215, 227

Harvey, H.H. (Bill) 115

Hashim Mbita Project 18

Hastings, Kamuzu 199

Hayes, Patricia 109

Heligoland 56, 64, 128

Helmore, James 48, 49, 50, 77

Helsdingent, J.M. van 147

Henrichsen, Dag 1, 19, 220

Herero Chief's Council 63, 64, 65, 131, 194, 221, 223, 235

Hermann, Tamar 10

Hertzog, General 92

High Court of Namibia 17, 79, 175, 187, 242

Hillebrand, H.E.F. 147
Hillebrecht, Werner 1, 19
Hippo 108, 154
Holub, Emil 39, 43, 170, 171
Holy Family Mission 1, 19, 157, 159, 201, 207, 215, 226
House of Assembly (Northern Rhodesia) 141
Hukwe 5, 131
Hwange 32

I

Ibbu (Luhofu) 142, 178
Ibembe (Kabulabula) 43
Ikaba 75, 76, 203, 208
Ikuhane, Chief 30
Ilukena, Joshua 7, 105, 215
Immelman, W.F.J. 115
Impalila Island 3, 36, 41, 43, 51, 52, 82, 130, 131, 154, 170, 203, 212
Imusho 182
Indian Ocean 49
Inkatha 154
Institute of Development Studies 18
International Court of Justice (ICJ) 111, 113, 148, 245
Ipumbu, Chief 84, 101, 191
Isuswa 39, 131
Italy XI, 95
Itege, Munitenge 25, 26, 30, 32, 33, 34, 36, 45, 46, 47, 70, 138, 167, 168, 170, 186, 188, 203, 233, 245, 264

J

Jacobs, A. 1, 150
Jalla, A. 27, 28, 31, 32, 40, 42, 133
Jappe 51
Johns, Harris 52, 53
Johnson, Ben 52, 53

K

Kabajani, Alfred Simataa 208
Kabbe 86, 177, 193, 206, 225
Kabende, Imataa (Simataa) 43, 44, 70, 240
Kabuku 43
Kabulabula 43, 52, 75
Kachikau 39, 89, 142
Kachikau (Kachekabwe) 39, 89, 142

Kachilombwa, Dennis 232
 Kalahari 58, 59
 Kalangula, Peter 256
 Kalengwe 101, 102
 Kalimbeza 75, 86, 174, 175
 Kalundu 101, 102, 196, 197, 198
 Kamene 153
 Kangumu, Bennett XI, XII, XIII, 8, 64, 75, 76, 90, 92, 103, 109, 117, 121, 128, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 152, 154, 156, 201, 203, 205, 208, 222, 243
 Kanono 20, 30, 70, 201, 242, 247
 Kanono Bantu Community School 201, 248
 Kanyanso, Solomon 209
 Kaokoveld 193, 219
 Kaonga 31, 36
 Kapambue, Corporal 72
 Kapelwa, Richard 233, 254, 257
 Kapuuu, Clemens 19, 220, 221, 223, 235, 270
 Karakuwise 138
 Kasane 72, 77, 110, 265
 Kasenu 43, 86
 Kasheshe 208
 Kasika 76
 Kasu, A. 208
 Katchikau 110
 Katembo, Reginald Z. 255
 Katima Mulilo 1, 4, 18, 19, 28, 29, 43, 44, 45, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, 67, 72, 76, 83, 84, 87, 88, 98, 99, 100, 103, 104, 105, 107, 109, 110, 111, 113, 114, 115, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 124, 164, 137, 142, 147, 148, 151, 152, 153, 154, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 173, 176, 177, 181, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 196, 197, 200, 201, 203, 204, 206, 207, 208, 212, 213, 215, 216, 217, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 235, 237, 238, 240, 246, 248, 249, 256, 270
 Katima Mulilo Mission School 248
 Katjavivi, Peter 144, 149, 150, 151, 201, 228, 229
 Katounyana 154, 237
 Kaufmann, Hans (Samukosi) 71
 Kaunda, Kenneth 155, 199, 203, 205, 231, 250, 253
 Kaunga 33
 Kavimba 54
 Kazungula 28, 31, 36, 41, 54, 64, 71, 72, 73, 74, 80, 132, 137, 139, 142
 Keetmanshoop 222, 223
 Kenya 86, 251
 Kenyatta, Jomo 199
 Keys 53

Khama III 39, 56, 170
 Khorixas (see also Welwitschia) 223, 236, 248
 Kilnerton College 247
 Kimberley 147
 Knight, C.S. 140
 Koevoet 154, 246
 Kongola (see also Manyeha) 142, 153, 182, 218, 242
 Kongwa 149, 251
 Kruger, C.E. 4, 5, 20, 24, 25, 27, 30, 31, 37, 38, 41, 42, 47, 50, 51, 52, 53, 58, 59, 61, 66,
 67, 70, 71, 74, 76, 77, 81, 83, 86, 94, 96, 114, 115, 119, 122, 123, 124, 139, 142,
 143, 147, 148, 165, 168, 169, 171, 173, 190, 193, 194, 195, 199, 200, 201, 203,
 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 211, 212, 213, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 226, 227,
 228, 229, 243
 Kuhangwa, Jacob 230, 250
 Kulibabika, Maxwell 229
 Kunene River 141
 Kuratau 35
 Kwando River 3, 33, 43, 53, 56, 126, 137, 142, 181, 232, 265
 Kwanza Norte 232

L

Labour Agent Bureau 134, 162
 Lake Lyambezi 17, 177, 110, 177, 178, 186, 187, 188, 243
 Lake Lyambezi Fishery Board 179
 Lake Ngami 50
 Lake Nyasa 49
 Laos 144
 League of Nations 72, 78, 80, 90, 95, 239, 240, 265
 Legge, George 52
 Legge, J.A. 52, 74, 76, 82
 Legislative Assembly 115, 122, 124, 126, 176, 192
 Legislative Council 59, 60, 122, 140, 141, 179, 267
 Legislative Council (Northern Rhodesia) 140
 Leppan, A.W. 147
 Letia 4, 66, 67, 69, 72, 74, 168, 171
 Letsholathebe 43
 Levy, Judge 184, 185
 Lewanika (Lubosi) 29, 34, 40, 44, 51, 56, 66, 67, 70, 73, 74, 93, 95, 129, 132, 134, 167,
 168, 171, 181, 253
 Lewanika, Mwanawina 40, 170, 171, 253
 Lewis Construction 118, 119, 120, 121
 Leys, Colin 151, 152, 198
 Libebe 4, 57, 67, 153

Liberia 111, 113, 114, 245
 Lifumbela, Sipensa 75, 174, 196
 Likando, Ernest 20, 33, 36, 37, 49, 70, 75, 76, 103, 158, 160, 202, 203, 206, 216, 225, 228, 229, 231, 232, 233, 251, 255, 256
 Likando, Gilbert 18
 Limbo, Patrick 256
 Lindley 62
 Linyanti River 3, 32, 36, 37, 38, 42, 43, 44, 45, 49, 52, 67, 70, 76, 101, 130, 132, 162, 167, 168, 172, 174, 181, 182, 193, 203, 209, 210, 240, 242
 Linyanti (see also Sangwali) 3, 32, 36, 37, 38, 42, 43, 44, 45, 49, 52, 67, 70, 76, 101, 130, 132, 162, 167, 168, 172, 174, 181, 182, 193, 203, 209, 210, 240, 242
 Lisikili 161
 Liswani I, Chief 33
 Liswani II, Chief 131, 170
 Liswani III, Chief 242
 Liswaninyana, Chief 39, 44, 68, 190
 Liswani (see also Chika) 28, 29, 32, 36, 37, 39, 44, 45, 64, 68, 118, 130, 131, 162, 166, 170, 171
 Litundu-Lituu, Chief 30, 258
 Livingstone 50, 72, 77, 86, 88, 105, 110, 112, 132, 133, 135, 142, 212
 Livingstone, David (see also Munore) 27, 38, 48, 49, 77, 133
 Lizauli 44, 86, 172
 Lobengula 63
 London Missionary Society (LMS) 48, 49, 77
 Longa Island 28
 Louw, Eric W. 19, 47, 88, 90, 91, 94, 101, 115, 128, 191, 211
 Lubosi (Lewanika) 40, 171
 Luhofu (Ibbu) 142, 178
 Luhonono (see also Schuckmannsburg) 65
 Lukonga, Jackson Mazazi 179, 180, 182, 210, 231, 232, 233, 254
 Lukonga, Siloiso 179, 180, 181, 182, 199, 202, 210, 231
 Lukwakwa 38
 Lumumba, Patrice 199
 Lusaka 19, 28, 150, 151, 155, 199, 201, 203, 204, 206, 215, 218, 230, 232, 241, 249, 250, 252, 253, 254, 255, 257, 258
 Lusese 65, 76
 Lyaboloma, Judea 229
 Lyashulu 35

M

Mababe 39, 44, 64, 68
 Mabate, Side Mubyana 54
 Mabuku, Benjamin 118, 232, 242, 252, 254

Machili River 109
 Mackenzie, John 50
 Mafikeng 57, 77, 247, 249
 Mafulo 119, 206, 207, 209, 210, 214, 215, 226, 227, 249
 Mafwe Traditional Authority 17
 Mafwira (Mafwila) 32, 39
 Mahango Game Park 3
 Mahohoma 207
 Mahundu 80, 110, 142, 177, 178
 Mainga 28, 29, 31, 32, 35, 36, 40, 42
 Makgadikgadi Pan 39
 Makumba 43
 Makuni 33
 Malala 41
 Malan, Captain 120
 Malawi 107
 Malyansanzwe, Chieftainess Ntolwa 39
 Mambova 36
 Mamili, Benjamin Bebi 180, 209, 229
 Mamili, Chief Denten Simataa 42, 43, 44, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 82, 83, 84, 96, 99, 100, 101,
 102, 123, 168, 169, 172, 173, 179, 181, 182, 188, 189, 196, 208, 240, 242, 258, 261
 Mamili, Mason Liseli 247
 Mamili, Muyongo 87
 Mamili National Park 3
 Mamili, Richard Temuso Muhinda 124, 125, 184, 258
 Mamili, Simasiku 118, 123, 177, 201, 205, 233, 255, 256
 Manwela, Silumbu 87, 227
 Manyeha (Kongola) 135, 142, 218
 Maree, Chris 114
 Maritz, Chris 20, 21, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 38, 39, 165, 166, 168, 169, 170,
 183, 184
 Marshall, General 19, 114
 Marx, Karl 16
 Mashambo 41
 Mashi River (see also Kwando) 14, 22, 24, 28, 29, 32, 40, 43, 53, 69, 73, 74, 77, 79, 81,
 105, 147, 129, 135, 149, 228, 242, 265, 269
 Mashonaland 63
 Masiala 32, 43
 Masire, Quett 60
 Masubiya Traditional Authority 17
 Maswahu, Vernet Sibanda 200, 202, 205, 213, 215, 216, 217, 219, 220, 221, 223, 235,
 248
 Mataa 40

Matabeleland 63
 Matende 70
 Matengu, Gideon 202, 255, 256
 Matengu, Ignatius 208, 215, 232
 Matengu, Lemmy 158, 231, 232, 233, 254, 255, 256
 Mathibe 68, 69
 Matjila, Andrew N. 17, 134, 161, 162
 Matongo 202, 242, 252, 254
 Matsharatshara 41
 Matwatwa 35
 Maun 72, 80, 136, 138, 142, 265
 Maxwell 206, 229
 Mayala 227, 229
 Maytham 123
 Mayuni 14, 43, 44, 45, 27, 44, 45, 46, 69, 169, 242
 Mayuwa 41
 Mazazi, Jackson 182, 254
 Mazumani (Linyanti) 36
 Mbalangwe 8, 14, 22, 179, 181, 170, 180, 182, 242, 258, 263
 Mbala, Sihope 99
 Mbeta Island 29
 Mbololo 36, 38, 43
 Mbungo 41
 Melber, Henning 18, 64, 128
 Memmi, Albert 11
 Michelson, Charlie 52
 Michelson, M. 52, 76
 Mifilifili, Lota 180
 Milinga, John Matali 87, 118, 208, 215, 225
 Mmamochisane 38
 Moffat, Roger 35, 50, 215
 Mohembo 80, 136, 137, 138
 Mokwai, Queen 133
 Mokwe 41
 Moleah 144, 145, 154, 159
 Molnar 114
 Moody (Mutti), Phelany 51, 52
 Moraliswani, Chief Maiba 102, 171, 180, 195, 196, 208, 209, 227
 Moraliswani, Josiah Mutwa 122
 Moremi 39
 Morule 118
 Mostert, H.J. 196
 Mozambique 63, 144, 222, 245

Mpacha 111, 114, 118, 121, 154, 159, 237
 Mteka, Constable 222
 Mubiana, Charles Mubuyaeta 202, 247
 Mubonenwa, Davidson 209
 Mudumu 3
 Mufale 70
 Muhatalizwi 70
 Muhembo Drift 57
 Muhulumwe, Joba 70
 Mukendwa, Mumbone 87
 Mulambwa 32, 33
 Mulawato 70
 Mulia 29, 31
 Muller, Piet 16, 115
 Mulonda, Crispin Simasiku 201, 205, 207, 230, 237, 250
 Multi-Party Conference (MPC) 112, 234
 Munare (see also David Livingstone) 49
 Mundia, Nalumino 199, 205, 231, 250, 255
 Munga 39
 Munguni, Milinga 208
 Munihango, Ngambela Kalundu 70, 171, 196, 197, 198
 Munimahela, Ngambela 70
 Muntunjobuswa, Induna 108, 110
 Muntu Njo Buswa (see also Lake Lyambezi) 177
 Munyandi, Michael Allan 181, 182, 243
 Mushala, Adamson 155
 Musialela, Samuel 202
 Musialike, Nkonkwena 208
 Musialike, Robson 208
 Musipili, Shoni 208
 Musisanyani, Ngambela 70
 Musiyalela, Samuel 180, 209
 Mutabelezi, David 232, 255, 256
 Mutabi, Jonathan 202
 Mutangelwa, Imasiku 241
 Mutimani, Induna 180, 209
 Mutonga, David 196
 Mutumuswana, Induna 70, 180
 Mutwa, George Liswaniso 202, 247, 251
 Mutwa, Gilbert 225, 231
 Mutwamezi 43
 Muyako 186, 187, 209

Muyongo, Albert Mishake XIII, 44, 45, 158, 160, 182, 183, 199, 201, 202, 210, 215, 216, 227, 230, 231, 232, 233, 237, 240, 242, 243, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 261, 270

Muyongo, Simeon 229

Muyunda, Thomas 202, 203

Mwaala 209

Mwala, Chieftainess 180

Mwambwa Seluka 32, 43, 44

Mwanambinyi 28, 29, 30, 31

Mwanamwale, Chief 29, 30, 31, 36

Mwanamwale, Soha 36

Mwanananwa, Godfrey Kwana 208

Mwanangombe 32, 43

Mwanasilundu 28

Mwanawina II 40, 170, 171, 253

Mwandi (see also Sesheke) 29, 38, 43, 65, 124, 171, 226, 227

Mwanga, Nathan 105

Mwanota 43, 44, 69, 181

Mwauluka 86

Mwilima, Joel 180

Mzilikazi 11, 35, 45, 46, 50, 129, 130, 162, 164, 240, 264

N

Nakabolelwa Community School 208, 242

Nakabunze (see also Katima Mulilo) 28, 29, 87, 118

Nakaywe 31

Naliele 24, 36, 37, 38, 130, 162, 164

Nalishuwa, Alfred Tongo 202, 208, 215, 216, 218, 251

Namakalu, Oswin 151, 152, 156, 158

Nambweza 161

Namibia Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) 186, 237, 238

Namibian Defence Force 237

Namwi Foundation 161, 164

Namwi Island 117, 142, 207, 227

Nanyemba, Peter 229

Nasser, Gamal Abdel 199

Nata 138, 142, 144

Natal 154

National Archives of Namibia (NAN) 1, 17, 18, 19, 22, 202, 221, 222

National Assembly 126

National Patriotic Front (NPF) 234

Native Military Corps 99, 142, 147, 163

Nawa, Joseph 149, 202, 230, 250
 Nchindo, Robert 86, 87, 196, 215
 Ncumbe, Mamili 42, 43
 Ndalatando 232
 Ndeikwila, Samson 251
 Ndola 203
 Ndopu, Albert Zacharia 199, 201, 202, 207, 215
 Neale, Captain H. 74
 Nechenge, Kangumu 208
 Nefale, M. 1, 16
 Nel, Louis 123
 Ngamiland 29, 39, 41, 59, 69, 80, 131
 Ngoma 32, 39, 43, 44, 51, 52, 64, 142, 158, 172, 203, 233, 256
 Ngombala 31, 32
 Ngweze Village 53, 117, 118, 119, 120, 122, 158, 176
 Njekwa 39
 Njoko River 41
 Nkando, Solomon 210
 Nkomo, Joshua 199
 Nkonkwena 39, 131, 170, 171, 172, 208
 Nkrumah, Kwame 199, 217
 Northern Labour Organization (NLO) 135, 136, 138, 143, 162, 163, 267
 Northern Rhodesia (see also Zambia) 13, 74, 84, 88, 99, 103, 104, 106, 107, 108, 110,
 112, 129, 139, 191, 207, 212, 246, 254, 267
 Nsundano, Chief 26, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 167, 168
 Nsundwa 52, 76
 Ntelamo, Mubita 87, 227
 Ntuntu, D.K. 118
 Nujoma, Sam 60, 144, 149, 150, 151, 155, 157, 199, 204, 205, 230, 231, 232, 249, 250,
 251, 252, 253, 259, 261
 Nunga 33, 142
 Nyasaland (see also Malawi) 111
 Nyungu 37

O

Odendaal Commission XII, 12, 82, 102, 112, 113, 115, 117, 190, 195, 196, 198, 235, 267,
 268
 Ohangwena 237
 Ohopoho (see also Opuwo) 219, 220, 223, 235
 Okavango River 36, 57, 77, 79, 136, 137, 138, 160, 193
 Omega 154, 159
 Omer-Cooper, J.D. 129

Omusati 237
 Ondangua 138
 Onderstepoort 86
 Oppenheim 62
 Opuwo (see also Ohopoho) 235
 Organization of African Unity (OAU) 113, 148, 231
 Oshana 237
 Oshikango 138
 Oshikoto 237
 Otavi 58, 135
 Otavi Minen Gesellschaft 135
 Otto-Reiner, Antje 19
 Oudshoorn 148
 Ovamboland 85, 87, 111, 138, 193, 237, 246
 Ovamboland People's Organization (OPO) 111
 Owen, Missionary 99

P

Palapye 142
 Palmberg, Mai 15
 Palm Groove 71
 Pandamatenga 41
 Panda Matenga 3
 Panzera, Francis W. 57, 68
 Paris Missionary Society 28, 65, 99, 104
 Parsons, Lieutenant 71
 Patricia, Sister 109, 196
 People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) 120, 144, 146, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 155, 156, 158, 161, 163, 227, 228, 268
 Petlola 259
 PIDICO (see also Egyptian Development Company) 260
 Pietersburg 54
 Piggery 121, 176
 Pinto 133
 Pohamba, Hifikepunye 17, 227
 Policia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado (PIDE) 155, 246
 Port Elizabeth 148
 Portugal XI, 40, 53, 56, 61, 63, 80, 128, 134, 136, 137, 140, 144, 149, 155, 239, 240, 244, 246
 Potgieter, A.J. 147
 Potgieter, E.F. 123
 Potts, J.W. 135

Pretoria 6, 12, 19, 47, 83, 90, 91, 95, 96, 98, 99, 100, 101, 142, 112, 115, 163, 129, 143,
 145, 150, 155, 157, 159, 195, 198, 200, 206, 209, 217, 219, 223, 229, 244, 245,
 247, 256, 259, 267
 Pretorius 11, 20, 29, 30, 31, 38, 40, 41, 42, 48, 49, 50, 95, 132, 133, 134, 139, 167, 170,
 171, 239, 243
 Price, Roger 48, 49, 50
 Pütz, Joe 21, 124, 125, 202, 226, 233
 Puzeli, Solomon 225, 228

Q

Qunku 41
 Qunkunyane 41

R

Radio Zambia 158
 Rakops 39, 170
 Randfontein 147
 Raphael, Father 114, 252
 Recces 154, 155
 Rehoboth 245, 252
 Renamo (MNR) 245
 Rhodes, Cecil 58
 Riruako, Kuaima 257
 Roma College 247
 Rossouw, J.J. 123
 Rothe, Richard 58, 59, 63, 66, 67, 69, 132, 168
 Royal Air Force (RAF) 147
 Royce, Anya 14
 Rundu 72, 135, 137, 138, 155, 218, 224
 Rusangu 103
 Russia (see also Soviet Union) 197

S

Sakapani 33
 Sakutiya, Mubita 87
 Salisbury 71
 Salupeto 70
 Sambala (Singalamwe) 77
 Sanden, Per 229
 San Francisco 18
 Sangwali 32, 38, 44, 45, 50, 130, 162, 180, 199
 Sangwali (see also Linyanti) 32, 38, 44, 45, 50, 130, 162, 180, 199
 Sartre, Jean-Paul 11

Sasa, David 22, 24, 35, 41, 45, 46, 50
 Saul, John 151, 152, 198
 Savimbi, Jonas 256
 Savute (Savuti) 33
 Schapera, Isaac 35, 42, 43
 Schleswig Holstein 52
 Schmidt 86
 Schuckmann, Bruno von 65
 Schuckmannsburg 52, 53, 65, 71, 72, 74, 77, 80, 87, 88, 98, 173, 244, 265, 266
 Sebetwane 11, 14, 24, 30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 45, 46, 48, 50, 64, 129, 130, 131, 162, 163,
 164, 240, 243, 264
 Sechocho, J.M. 118
 Sehani, Michael 21, 45, 22, 46
 Seiner, Franz 4, 53, 57, 58, 63, 66, 67, 68, 69, 82
 Sekau 32, 43
 Sekeletu 24, 38, 43, 48, 49, 50, 171
 Sekelo, Boniface Chandu 208
 Selborne, Lord 57, 58, 59, 63, 65
 Selebogo, I.M. 118
 Seleti 34
 Selous Scouts 246
 Seluka, Mwambwa 32, 43, 44, 69, 181
 Senanga 28, 31, 43
 Senegal 233, 256
 Sepopa 38, 39, 40, 131, 170, 172, 188, 243
 Serowe 99, 100
 Sesheke (see also Mwandi) 29, 30, 31, 38, 40, 43, 44, 58, 64, 65, 69, 71, 72, 73, 74, 83, 88,
 93, 99, 104, 105, 109, 110, 124, 132, 146, 157, 159, 170, 171, 182, 193, 195, 199,
 204, 205, 206, 226, 242, 267
 Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) 12, 13, 75, 76, 86, 99, 103, 104, 176, 266
 Shakawe 136, 138
 Shaka Zulu 129, 162
 Shamukuni, D.M. 20, 27, 29, 33, 34, 167, 168, 170
 Shanjo, Mafwira (Mafwila) 32, 39
 Shanjo, Nsundano 26, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 167, 168
 Shantambwa, Sinvula 203, 208
 Sharpeville 199
 Sheshe Island 38
 Shifu, Chief Boniface 27
 Shityuwete, Helao 148, 149, 151
 Shuuya, Leonard Philemon (see also Castro) 151
 Sibalatani, Bernard 203
 Sibbinda 41, 44, 54, 228

Sibungo, Pax Imbuwa 225, 229
 Sichili 104
 Sikachila 37, 130
 Sikanjabuka 86, 178
 Sikute 33
 Silalo 227
 Siloiso, Alfred 180, 182, 202, 210
 Silongo, Luniso 99
 Siluka 4
 Silumbu 70, 87
 Silvester, Jeremy 1, 154, 155
 Simalumba, Simon 37, 87, 130
 Simanyonga, Isaac 180
 Simasiku, Chibeya Siseho 118, 123, 177, 201, 205, 233, 255, 256
 Simasiku, Chief 53, 210, 258
 Simataa, Machinga 99, 208
 Simbwaye, Brendan Kangongolo XIII, 1, 13, 144, 18, 19, 111, 145, 199, 200, 201, 203,
 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223,
 224, 225, 226, 230, 231, 235, 248, 249, 255, 218
 Simubali, Adrian Waluka 201, 204, 206, 207, 208, 215, 216, 230
 Simubali, Andrew Masuku 200, 205
 Simungoma 202
 Simwanza, Simasiku 123
 Singalamwe (Salambala) 33, 77, 86, 142, 150, 152, 153, 154, 182, 203, 227, 228, 229,
 242
 Sinjembela 182
 Sinvula, Jalarth Mutoyongwa 203, 208
 Sioma 31, 33, 36
 Siomunyi, F.M. 250
 Sipalo, Munukayumbwa 199, 205, 231
 Sipopa 39, 167
 Sitoti Island 29
 Siukuta, David 123, 209
 Siyanga, Conrad 50
 Siyomunji, Josephat 203
 Siyongo, Godwin 255, 256
 Slabbert, Captain 221
 Smit, D.L. 92
 Smith, Anthony D. 15
 Smit, H.P. 88
 Smuts, H.H.L. 147
 Smuts, J.A. 99, 100, 147
 Solusi Training School 103

Songa, Calvin 232
 Sonntag, A.E. 115
 South Africa XII, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 17, 19, 20, 35, 39, 42, 43, 47, 48, 52, 54, 55, 57, 60, 72, 74, 76, 78, 79, 83, 86, 88, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 98, 99, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 108, 109, 111, 112, 113, 114, 117, 121, 122, 123, 124, 127, 163, 164, 128, 129, 132, 135, 136, 137, 142, 143, 144, 182, 145, 146, 183, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 165, 193, 171, 183, 184, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 204, 205, 209, 210, 211, 215, 218, 224, 225, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 233, 234, 235, 238, 239, 240, 241, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 253, 254, 255, 256, 259, 260, 261, 266, 218, 267, 268, 270
 South African Air Force (SAAF) 86, 142, 147, 163, 191
 South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) 246
 South African Defense Force (SADF) 54, 111, 120, 142, 145, 147, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 158, 159, 160, 161, 163, 164, 246, 260, 262, 268
 South African Medical Corps 105
 South African Police (SAP) 150, 151, 224, 225, 248
 Southern Africa Development Corporation (SADC) 18
 Southern Rhodesia 58, 71, 103, 111, 118, 124, 134, 140, 141, 142, 146, 162, 200, 267
 South West Africa National Union (SWANU) 111, 231
 South West Africa People's Organisation of Namibia (SWAPO of Namibia) 19, 20, 163, 144, 148, 182, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 161, 183, 202, 204, 210, 215, 218, 222, 225, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 235, 237, 238, 242, 244, 245, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 259, 260, 261, 265, 218, 268, 270
 South West Africa Police 266
 South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF) 154, 159
 Soviet Union 144
 Spee, Rudolf 229
 Statham, Colonel 52, 53
 Stephens, Lieutenant (Sirupula) 71
 Stewart, H.J.H. 147
 Steyn, Marthinus 158
 Stockholm 228, 229
 Streitwolf, Kurt (also Kambungu or Kataramatunga) 5, 21, 44, 45, 53, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 82, 126, 131, 132, 134, 167, 169, 173, 174, 190, 192, 194, 245, 64
 Subia Royal House 169, 184, 185, 188
 Subiya Traditional Authority 30
 Supreme Court 183
 Surmon, Captain W. 74
 Sutherland, R.F. 76
 Sveriges Radio 229
 SWA Company 135

Swakopmund 257
SWAPO Elders' Council 202
Sweden 228, 229
Syria 95

T

Tanga 247, 254
Tanganyika (see also Tanzania) 63, 111, 253, 254
Tanzania (see also Tanganyika) 149, 151, 230, 231, 249, 251, 253, 256
The Hague 57, 114, 149, 239
Theunissen, Andrew 19
Thompson, L.D. 147, 149
Tidman 49
Tjiriang, Ngarikutuke 253
Tjivona 69
Tlhale 39
Toivo yaToivo, Andimba Herman 149
Toka Plateau 31, 33, 36, 38, 48, 130, 170
Toteng 80
Transkei 217
Transvaal 35, 54, 118, 121
Transvaal Provincial Administration 118, 121
Tribal Trust Fund 85, 89, 95, 116
Tribe, Lieutenant 71
Trollope, Major Leslie French 25, 36, 37, 53, 71, 77, 78, 83, 85, 87, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 96, 100, 102, 103, 104, 110, 122, 123, 124, 130, 132, 147, 148, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 209, 212
Troumbas, Aristotle 51
Tsau 80
Tsheko 59
Turnhalle Constitutional Conference 123, 239

U

União Nacional Para a Independência de Total de Angola (UNITA) XII, 246, 256
United Democratic Front (UDF) 234
United Democratic Party (UDP) 24, 234, 237, 252, 256, 257, 258
United National Independence Party (UNIP) 199, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 216, 231, 253, 269
United Nations Organization (UNO) 10, 109, 111, 149, 113, 114, 151, 157, 158, 192, 203, 204, 205, 209, 215, 216, 225, 231, 233, 234, 240, 241, 245, 246, 254, 261, 266, 270
United States of America (USA) 18, 144, 144, 147
University of Birmingham 23
University of Namibia (UNAM) XIII, 18, 45, 21, 22, 24, 35, 41, 46

University of Oslo 21, 41, 186, 202, 226, 238, 250
University of Stellenbosch 11, 20, 29, 30, 40, 167, 239

V

Van der Waal 178
Van der Walt, B.J. 153
Vansina, Jan 18
Vaughan, Corporal 72
Venning, J.H. 28, 73, 74, 129
Vergeuil, M.J. 123
Verwoerd 207
Victoria Falls (see also Chungwe Namutitima) 32, 33, 48, 54, 58, 71, 99, 104, 124, 147, 163
Vietnam 144
Viljoen, General 158
Vorster, B.J. 114
Vorster, Jan 115

W

Waaksaamheid en Belange Organisasie vir Namibia 161
Walvis Bay 58, 61, 141
Wankie 228
Warmbad 220, 221, 222, 223, 235
Webb 80
Welwitschia (see also Khorixas) 223, 224, 225, 235
Wenela 121, 176, 237
West Caprivi 3, 72, 77, 80, 159, 160, 263
West Caprivi Game Park 3
Western Europe 228
Whittle, J.M. 147
Wills, A.J. 38
Wilmore, G. 75
Wilson 115, 129, 215
Windhoek 4, XIII, 1, 4, 41, 43, 44, 79, 83, 84, 89, 91, 92, 95, 100, 111, 124, 125, 128, 131, 135, 137, 152, 168, 173, 183, 184, 191, 199, 202, 218, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 233, 238, 245, 248, 255, 256, 258, 268
Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) XI, 19, 54, 99, 106, 108, 121, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 158, 162, 237, 267
Wium, D.J. 123
Wright, Sergeant 81

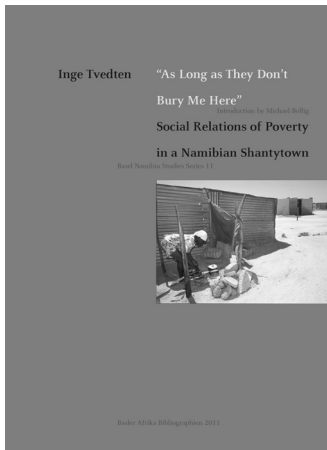
Y

Yeta III 172

Z

- Zambezi River 3, 28, 29, 30, 33, 36, 37, 41, 43, 45, 47, 48, 49, 55, 56, 57, 58, 61, 64, 65, 68, 69, 73, 75, 104, 106, 109, 120, 124, 126, 128, 130, 131, 134, 137, 139, 150, 151, 152, 154, 156, 157, 158, 161, 162, 173, 174, 181, 208, 211, 225, 227, 231, 241, 243, 263, 265, 270
- Zambezi Transport Syndicate 75
- Zambia National Archives 19
- Zambian Defence Force 156
- Zambia (see also Northern Rhodesia) XII, 1, 3, 7, 9, 13, 19, 43, 23, 24, 163, 38, 144, 41, 145, 145, 152, 139, 152, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 161, , 166, 182, 198, 199, 200, 202, 203, 206, 208, 209, 215, 218, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 231, 233, 239, 241, 244, 248, 249, 250, 253, 255, 256, 259, 263, 270
- Zanzibar 56, 64, 128, 253
- Zeller, Wolfgang 18, 22, 56, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 113, 117, 128, 132, 133, 135, 142, 143, 144
- Zilitene 178, 243
- Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) 244
- Zimbabwe (see also Southern Rhodesia) 32, 145, 147
- Zimmerman 259
- Zinn, H.J. 145

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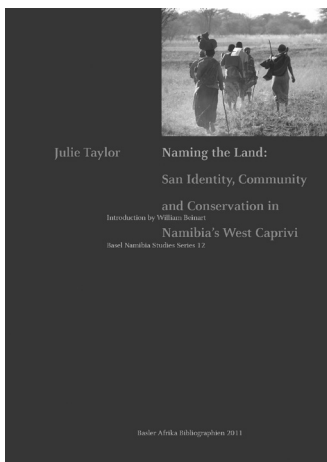
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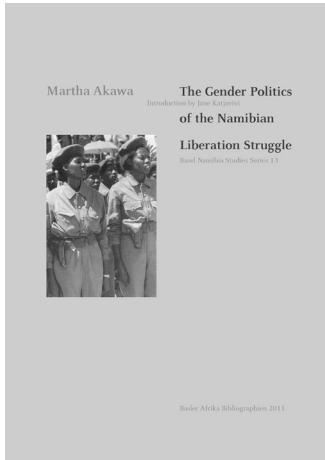
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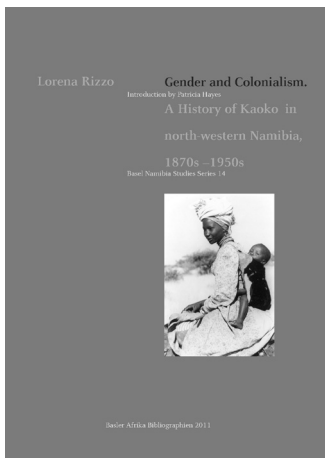


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